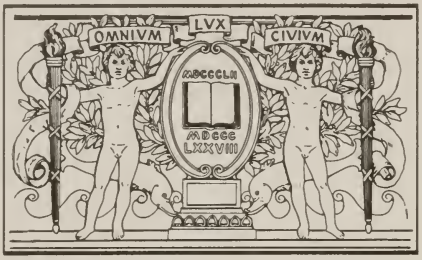
DAUGHTERS
OF THE
CONFEDERA



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These Southern girls were, and are yet, very charming.
—*Preface.*

Frontispiece.

Three Daughters of the Confederacy

The Story of their Loves and their Hatreds, their Joys and their Sorrows, during Many Surprising Adventures on Land and Sea

BY

CYRUS TOWNSEND BRADY

Author of "The Southerners," "A Little Traitor to the South," "The Corner in Coffee," "Sir Henry Morgan, Buccaneer," "The Records," etc., etc.

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Three Daughters of the Confederacy

Issued September, 1905

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TO

MRS. JAMES HENRY PARKER

And the New York Chapter of the Daughters of the Confederacy

I DEDICATE THIS BOOK

On behalf of that Fair Daughter of the South, MY WIFE

PREFACE

The Southern girls were, and are yet, very charming—I speak by experience of one—and it is no wonder the blue-clad conquerors bowed before them and at their imperious behest gladly essayed the rôle of the vanquished involved in matrimony. With one daughter of the Confederacy I sometimes fight the battles of the great rebellion—only she does not like that term—over again; but to-day the results are different. I often say had she been in command of one side, and I the other, the verdict of Appomattox might have been reversed and much history would have had to be rewritten. At least I am warranted in believing this if I may judge from the vigor with which the lost cause is espoused by the twentieth century fireside—*i.e.*, our patent gas-log!

Two of the lovers of this trio of girls which I have so proudly and affectionately championed in these pages were Northern men: one a sailor and the other a sort of non-combatant, but a good fellow, nevertheless. The third hero, who won the last girl, was Southern in every fibre of his being. Two of the girls loved the South with all the passionate fervor for which the Southern woman was famous; the third was but a lukewarm daughter after all. Yet in other ways she was such a nice girl that I pray for her the charitable judgment of the feminine —I know the masculine will agree with me in thinking her an altogether pleasing young person.

For the rest, there is not much history and but little fighting hereafter; but there is plenty of love making, and not a little fun, mingled with the adventure. Tears follow, of course, and the clouds of the havoc-making days, but the light of affection always provides a silver lining, and everything, as did the great war itself, comes out happily in the end. Take my word for it, anxious reader, and look not at a final page until you come to it in due course.

Of all the novels and romances that I have written, those of the Civil War have met with the warmest welcome and have elicited the highest praise. May you begin this volume with pleasant anticipation; may you read it with increasing satisfaction; and may you put it aside finally, as I do this preface, with a feeling of regret that there is no more of it!

CYRUS TOWNSEND BRADY.

TOLEDO, OHIO, *September* 1, 1905.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I

The Lady from the Sea

CHAPTER		PAGE
I	Unique Participants	9
II	A Yankee Trick	18
III	The Plan that Did Not Work	27
IV	The Plan that Did	36
V	The Beginning of the Great Adventure	50
VI	Miss Ellen Yields to Force Alone	61
VII	The Desperate Determination of the Captain	71
VIII	Miss Ellen is Happy and Ashamed	81
IX	Love Making in the Morning	92
X	The "Pamlico" is Deceived	101
XI	Miss Ellen Arrives Too Late	111
XII	Miss Ellen is Again Disowned	121
XIII	Miss Ellen Provides a Way to Freedom	133
XIV	The Escape of the Captain	143
XV	The Major's Surprise	149
XVI	Masters of the Ship	154
XVII	The Reservation of the Captain	162

II

The Girl on the River

I	A Fortunate Meeting	173
II	The Masked Battery	178
III	Mr. Sears Pays for a Horse	190
IV	The Secret Dispatch	199

CHAPTER PAGE

V Mr. Sears Gets Him a Wife 212
VI Wanted — A Wife! 224
VII A Kiss and Good-by 236
VIII The Dilemma of Mrs. Sears 247
IX Acknowledged and Disavowed 260
X Mrs. Sears is Grateful 267
XI Down the River 280
XII And for Two the War is Over 293

III

The Maid of the Valley

I The Great Secession 311
II A Separation of Hearts 319
III A Meeting and a Surprise 329
IV The General's Dispatch Rider 341
V A Surprise of a Surprise 351
VI The Colonel's Guests 355
VII Battle and Confession 368
VIII Sent Away 379
IX Rosalie Joins the Regiment 388
X Stonewall Jackson's Greatest Day 396
XI Once More in the Valley 405
XII A Brush with Custer 410
XIII General Sheridan Intervenes 419
XIV Lincoln, Grant and Lee 425
XV After Appomattox 436

ILLUSTRATIONS

PAGE

These Southern girls were, and are yet, very charming.—Preface ..... *Frontispiece*

She shrank away from him with her hands clasped upon her breast 78

"You are betraying me——" 114

"*I* can," said a quiet voice from the corner of the room.. 260

She tore the document of renunciation in half 306

"Sir," she said, "perhaps you will heed a woman's plea". 373

THREE DAUGHTERS OF THE CONFEDERACY

I

The Lady from the Sea

CHAPTER I

UNIQUE PARTICIPANTS

Romance, in books, is associated always with the beautiful, generally with the best. We go backward into the past for a theme, since "'tis distance lends enchantment to the view." We fancy that the heart beats more warmly—certainly more gracefully—beneath satin and lace than beneath calico and fustian; that the love that quotes poetry is purer and more admirable than that which through hard necessity expresses itself ungrammatically; that diamond-buckled shoes, capering nimbly upon a carpet to the "lascivious pleasing of a lute," carry a man whose ideals must inevitably transcend those of his lowly brother who is upborne by the sabot or the brogan.

It is a dictum that there is no romance among the common people. The hero and the heroine, in the novel, must be disassociated from real life by unusual qualities and characteristics, else no one will care for their story—so, at least, it is imagined. Yet as the saddest tragedies are those of the commonplace, so the finest romances are those of the common people.

To pick up at random any of the current stories of the day is to find one evidence of a concession to the supposed popular yearning for the beautiful and the unusual in the descriptions—and, eke, the names—of the persons who give title to the story and live through their brief hours upon the written stage. With rare exceptions the heroines are beautiful in person, cultivated in mind, ancient in family—Lady Clara Vere de Veres, in short; while the hero is no longer beautiful—beautiful heroes went hopelessly out of fashion after the middle of the last century—but he is strong, tall, brave, noble, generous; and if dissipated, will ultimately reform. The names, as I have suggested above, of these godlike persons correspond, so far as names may,—and they may to a great degree, notwithstanding Shakespeare, —to these attributes. They fall trippingly from the tongue and linger musically in the memory. Invention which might better be devoted to the story is wasted on a name that, like Wordsworth's famous light, "never was on sea or land." I have invented several myself, therefore I know!

The heroine of the ensuing story is named Jones,

the hero, Smith. These names have been selected deliberately. That sets this romance at once apart from all other stories that have ever been written. That it may live up to its uniquity is the prayer of the writer. There must of necessity be thousands of romances in the Smith and Jones families, there are so many of them—and they are not dying, but, on the contrary, are increasing at a rapid rate! Cannot a Smith love as well as a Montmorenci? Is not the blood of a Jones filled with the same ichor as that of a Howard?

Miss Jones—her first and only other name was Ellen—was a young woman of no particular ancestry which need be dwelt upon. While it must be frankly admitted that she was not strikingly beautiful, it may be affirmed with equal truth that neither was she painfully homely. She was just a tall, well-formed, healthy American girl, such as you meet with in plenty, thank God! in any community in the land. Her hair was brown, her eyes were blue, her cheeks were red, and her teeth were white—these are not unusual colors, I believe. Her temper was quick, her disposition cheerful, her soul honest—nor are these qualities at all uncommon. She had been reasonably well educated for the period in which she lived, and in addition to what she had learned at the "Female Academy" she could sing a song, make a dress, or cook a dinner—happily, ability of this sort was, and is, not rare. There was nothing extraordinary about her from any point of view. Thousands of women like that—Smiths,

Jones, Browns, etc.—are being loved, wooed, and married every day; and the future of the country depends upon the steady continuance of a supply adequate to meet the demand.

As for Smith, the hero of this veracious tale, his first name was Thomas, intimately abbreviated to Tom. If he could have won Ellen Jones for his wife, he would have been supremely happy as well as very fortunate. If Miss Jones had no family to speak of, Mr. Smith had absolutely none at all. He had been raised—I use the word advisedly, it was more like raising than rearing—in an eleemosynary institution,—to wit, a public orphan asylum. The superintendent of the institution, not being gifted with imagination, had named him Smith. He had a regular list of names for the foundlings which he bestowed upon his charges in unvarying succession, and Smith fell to the lot of this unfortunate. One of the women attendants had further called him "Tommy" after her sweetheart. To identify the little waif from the New York streets and to differentiate him from other "Tom" Smiths, of whom there were not a few, the authorities had inserted a middle name. He had been picked up in Beekman Street, and in the records his full name, therefore, ran this way, Thomas Beekman Smith—which was imposing and highly satisfactory.

He was an unusually bright boy and as homely as they make them—freckled, red-headed, and, for all his name, evidently of Irish parentage. He was a jolly, cheerful, willing, hard-working little rat,

who dearly loved a joke, yet who was as ambitious as a ward politician. The superintendent of the orphan asylum happened to have a brother who was a captain in the United States Navy, one of the old-time, "1812," sailing-frigate captains. The superintendent's interest had been excited by this precocious young Smith. He had communicated some of this interest to his brother, and—in short, at the age of eleven the boy went to sea as a captain's servant.

By and by old Commodore Bainboro, observing there was good stuff in the lad, had him warranted a "reefer." Smith went through the usual course of the young aspirant in those days. He served creditably as a midshipman in the Mexican War, and thereafter, being still young enough, sought and received permission to go through the Naval Academy, from which he graduated in the Class of '52. Behold him in the fall of 1861 a full-fledged lieutenant in the United States Navy, still freckled-faced, still red-headed, still homely, still fond of a jest, still happy, and still ambitious—also in love. He was one of those rare mortals who can be happy, ambitious, and in love at one and the same time.

The war between the States had just begun. Opportunities for distinction would be many. That some of them should fall to his lot and be embraced accordingly was the determination of Smith. He owed everything to the United States, and was resolute to discharge some of the obligation. Things did not look very promising at first, however. Being without influence,—for old Commodore Bainboro

was long since dead,—the best assignment he could get for duty at the outbreak of the war was the old-fashioned sailing-frigate *St. Lawrence.* Smith had promptly applied for an appointment to one of the new steam sloops-of-war, but his application had been passed over and he had been relegated to this useless relic of the past.

The commander of the *St. Lawrence* was Commodore Hiram Paulding, who had been a midshipman in the War of 1812 and commended for his gallant conduct while executive officer of the *Ticonderoga* at the battle of Lake Champlain. The veteran also chafed at his relegation to the *St. Lawrence,* but there was no present help for it. In modern times he would have been retired long since, so he might perhaps consider himself lucky at being given any command at all.

As I have said, the war had just started. Blockade-running was in its infancy. Privateering on behalf of the Confederates was, however, beginning vigorously. Had it not been nipped in the bud by the prompt efforts of the Federal cruisers it might have done enough damage to have rendered unnecessary the appearance of the *Alabama* later on. The United States had proclaimed a blockade of the southern coast, but as yet it was laxly maintained, owing to paucity of force, and the Confederate privateers came and went pretty much as they pleased.

The *St. Lawrence,* attached to the North Atlantic blockading squadron, had been out two months and had not made a single capture. Officers and men

were disgusted. Why they should have expected to capture anything in a sailing-vessel when the Confederates usually employed the swiftest steamers for privateers and blockade-runners is a question. One afternoon in late July the *St. Lawrence* under easy sail was swinging along to the southward of Cape Hatteras. A week before she had been spoken by a despatch-boat, which had transmitted a general order from the flag-officer commanding the squadron to the effect that a certain Confederate privateer called the *Petrel* was fitting out in Pamlico Sound for a dash to sea, and that all the ships of the squadron were cautioned to look out for her.

"Nice notice to send us," remarked Smith, who was the executive officer of the frigate, to the second lieutenant of the ship. "We couldn't catch her with this old hooker if she were anchored. Oh, why don't they lay up this tub as a guardo, or store-ship, somewhere and give us a chance in a steamer?—something that has heels as well as guns?"

This was a poser for the second lieutenant. He did not attempt to answer it, but left Smith, who was enjoying a leisure hour, standing on the lee side of the quarter-deck staring over the rail at the empty sea and vacant sky to starboard. Empty sea and vacant sky? Well, not quite. When there was nothing else to attract his attention Smith could always see Ellen Jones in the ambient on the horizon. He was looking straight west. Beneath the sky-line some fifty miles away rose the low sands of the chain of islands that separated Pamlico and Albemarle

Sounds from the ocean. On one of the broad estuaries of Pamlico Sound stood the home of old Major Jones, Miss Ellen's father. For aught Smith knew the object of his dreams was there. At any rate, he did not know that she was anywhere else, and he embodied her there without hesitation.

Major Jones was of somewhat humble English birth. As a child he had come to the United States with his elder brother, a man of much shrewdness and mercantile ability. The elder Jones, who had settled in North Carolina, had amassed a considerable fortune. With a middle-class Englishman's love for position, he had succeeded in getting a commission in the army for Miss Ellen's father. While Smith had been stationed at the Brooklyn Navy Yard and Miss Ellen's father at Governor's Island, the young people had met. Smith had loved madly, Miss Ellen had been deeply interested. Her father had been absolutely opposed to Smith's wooing. He had sent him about his business; his brother's influence had been exerted, and the young man had been ordered away on a three-years' cruise in Asiatic waters, whence he had just returned at the outbreak of the war.

The year before that Major Jones' brother had died, leaving him all his property in North Carolina. The major had resigned his command and gone down to live on his brother's plantation, taking with him his daughter, his only child. Miss Ellen, save for her inclination toward Smith, was still heart-whole and fancy-free. It is falsely urged that the absent

are always wrong. Someone has said that a proverb is a lie or a platitude. In this case the wise saw quoted above was both. If she had been allowed free and unrestricted intercourse with the homely Mr. Thomas Beekman Smith, Ellen Jones might have found it impossible to have made him the object of her romance—which is going all contrary to the theories stated in the introduction! However that may be, severed from him by the stern edict of a practical parent, the interest engendered by the ardent wooing to which she had been subjected ripened into a deeper feeling. She grew to love the absent sailor almost as the absent sailor loved her. For his sake she had refused many offers of marriage which she had received both from the army and from the surrounding people of her North Carolina home. It is not only the superlative women who have men at their feet, be it remembered. The social position of the Jones family in proud, aristocratic, tide-water North Carolina was only fair. Yet Major Jones had money, his daughter was distinctly likable, and of young visitors the plantation had not a few.

Smith had come back from his Asiatic cruise with a determination, fruit of three years of absence and repression, to seek Miss Ellen and take her, willy nilly, for his own. The war had interrupted all that. When he might see her now was a question.

CHAPTER II

A YANKEE TRICK

Mr. Smith's reveries were interrupted, as the reveries of heroes upon ships always are interrupted, by the cry of,—

"Sail-ho!"

The keenest eyed on the frigate were kept constantly on the royal yards on the lookout. If the *St. Lawrence* did not catch anything, it would not be the fault of her captain. So soon, therefore, as the approaching sail had been sighted, she was recognized as a small topsail schooner, just the size and description of the *Petrel.*

Inasmuch as it was highly improbable that any vessel of that size, save such an armed vessel, would be in those waters in wartime, especially one heading toward the open sea, it was more than likely that the sail sighted was the *Petrel.* Originally the *Petrel* had been the revenue-cutter *Aiken,* a very swift goer—so swift that, although she was not a steamer, the Confederates had determined to risk her on a cruise. That the *St. Lawrence,* a heavy old fifty-gun frigate, could overhaul the light, dancing schooner was an impossibility.

Commodore Paulding, a resourceful old seaman, had been considering the matter since he had re-

ceived the flag-officer's notice, and he had determined to effect by stratagem what he could not hope to accomplish by any other means. Happening to be on deck when the sail was reported, so soon as, through the officers whom he had sent aloft for the purpose, he had verified the report that indicated that she was the *Petrel,* he resolved to run away!

Feeling sure that his great ship must have been observed from the small schooner, Commodore Paulding brought the frigate to the wind on the port tack and struck off at a broad angle from his former course directly away from the schooner, to the great astonishment of officers and crew. The evolution was observed from the schooner, which immediately changed its course so as to keep in the wake of the frigate.

"Wot's the old man up to?" growled old Bob Gantline, chief boatswain's mate. "Here we air, arter two months out, an' not a shot o' prize-money in our locker! An' the fust time we raises a sailin' wessel an' gits a chance, we ups with our starn an' runs away from her!"

The captain's mysterious move was presently elucidated, for the men were sent to quarters, the guns were run in, loaded and secured inboard, the port shutters were dropped, the openings for the gun-muzzles tightly closed; the men, save a few necessary hands, were sent below. The commodore and his aides on the poop-deck removed their swords and uniforms, the yards were braced in and cock-billed slightly, and in a thousand little ways not intelligible to any but

practised, trained observers, the great frigate was given the appearance of a lumbering old merchantman. Observing too that he was not being overhauled so rapidly as he wished, the captain got out drags astern, which materially decreased the speed of his ship. He told the helmsman not to keep too tight a luff on the frigate, but to let her go off to leeward gradually. Then everybody knew what was intended.

The manœuvre—the ruse, rather—was completely successful. The *Petrel* was not manned by a body of experienced man-o'-war's-men, whom it might have been difficult to deceive, and seeing the old *St. Lawrence* lumbering away from them, apparently making every effort to escape, her people—longshore, fresh-water sailors—came to the conclusion that a rich, old-fashioned merchantman—some of the East India ships at that time carried single topsail yards—was theirs for the taking. They cracked all sail on their little schooner, therefore, and drove recklessly after the flying frigate.

There was a long twenty-four pounder mounted on the *Petrel's* forecastle and two smaller guns, six-pounders, in broadside. Under the circumstances, the chase was neither a long nor a stern one. Before evening the *Petrel* had drawn almost within range of the frigate. Not a gun could be seen on the *St. Lawrence* and but few men about her decks. Those aft were in their shirt-sleeves and wore straw hats and sea-boots, like merchantmen. Ranging along to windward of the chase, as the *Petrel* did, there was

nothing to be seen of the maindeck of the frigate, anyway, on account of her heavy heel to starboard. Confident of their prey, the men on the *Petrel* cast loose and provided the "Long Tom" forward quite after the manner of the old-time privateer, and sent a shot sharp across the forefoot of the supposed trader.

No attention whatever was paid to this threat by the *St. Lawrence,* and when it was repeated, although the ball came perilously near to hitting the bows of the old frigate, she still remained silent. By this time the *Petrel* was well abreast and slightly to windward of her supposed prey. Her men must have been a very stupid lot, for at that distance it should have been impossible to escape the conclusion that they had a huge, old-fashioned man-of-war under their lee. Possibly they had so thoroughly absorbed the idea that they were chasing a merchantman in the ardor of their pursuit that their judgment was blinded. At any rate, the *Petrel,* confident of success, put up her helm and swooped down toward the frigate. The ports of the latter were thrown open as by magic. Huge black guns thrust their muzzles out over the sides, some of them speaking grimly and to a purpose. Two heavy bolts from long thirty-twos of the main battery ripped through the hapless Confederate cruiser. An eight-inch shell from the forward pivot exploded just as it struck the *Petrel's* side, tearing a hole in her big enough to drive a wagon through. The schooner was a total and absolute wreck. She careened and sunk in less than four

minutes. The *St. Lawrence* stopped firing immediately she saw the plight of the privateer and put her boats over. They had barely reached the *Petrel* when she went down, carrying a number of wounded with her. The rest were brought back to the frigate amid the loud guffaws of her officers and men. It was a huge sea joke, this, the capture of that saucy privateer in the way I have veraciously related it. Unfortunately, while the *Petrel's* men could not fail to see the point, the humor of it did not especially appeal to them.

The discomfited Confederates who were passed over the side of the frigate were not the only prizes, however. The one member of the *St. Lawrence's* crew who suffered any hardship in the battle was Lieutenant Thomas Beekman Smith, who had got away in the first boat dispatched to succor the sinking Confederate privateersmen. Just as he reached the *Petrel* one of her officers darted across the deck and threw something overboard. Smith could swim like a fish. As the object flew through the air past his head he saw that it was a mail-bag. Too late to stop the man, he promptly dived for it, and by great good fortune caught it as it sank below the surface of the water. A dripping but triumphant figure, he handed it to Commodore Paulding at the gangway, then went below to the ward-room to change his clothes.

The mail-bag was a treasure-trove indeed. Shortly afterward Lieutenant Smith was called to the cabin, where old Commodore Paulding sat in consultation

with his secretary. There was an open letter spread out on the table before him.

"Mr. Smith," he began formally, "your quickness of thought and promptness of action, which I take this occasion to commend, have done us a great service."

"Thank you, sir."

"I have examined the letters taken from the mail-bag. Most of them are personal and appear to be unimportant. This one, however, is of great interest. It seems that there is a new and formidable Confederate privateer being outfitted and prepared for cruising at Jones' Wharf, wherever that may be."

"I know about where it is, sir," volunteered Mr. Smith.

"Hey! what!" exclaimed the commodore. "Have you been in these waters before, sir?"

"No, sir, but it is one of those estuaries opening off Pamlico Sound between the Neuse and the Pamlico Rivers, and is the private property of Major William Henry Jones, formerly of the United States Army."

"Exactly true," said the commodore, looking at the letter again. "That's the man. Do you know him?"

"I did, sir, before the war. He was a major of artillery and was stationed at Governor's Island. He——" Smith hesitated.

"Well, sir?" interrogated the commodore impatiently.

"He—he had—a—daughter, sir."

"Oh, I see," smiled the old man. "Well, he has a privateer now. What was his daughter's name?"

"Miss Ellen, sir."

"That's the name of his privateer. I gather from this letter that she's all ready but her armament. This is to be brought to her from the Bahamas by the blockade-runner *Greyhound*. This schooner we have just sunk was to lie off the mouth of the inlet and pilot the *Greyhound* in. This letter is from Jones to her captain. It gives in detail the night and day signals by which the blockade-runner was to recognize the privateer and encloses a part of a chart."

"What a pity," murmured Mr. Smith, "that we were so precipitate in sinking her."

"Ay," said Commodore Paulding. "However, that can't be helped now. We must do the next best thing. It seems from this letter that the blockade-runner is not expected for a week yet. I have decided to run up to Fortress Monroe and get a schooner, if I can, and rig her up to look like this privateer. Then I intend to put you aboard her in the hope that you can capture the *Greyhound*. After that you must go in with her and destroy the privateer."

"Ay, ay, sir," said Smith, grinning with delight; "I'll do it."

"How will you proceed?" asked the commodore.

"Why, sir, I'll lay off the mouth of the inlet and keep watch for the *Greyhound*. When I sight her I'll make the signals and go aboard her and take

possession. Then I'll trans-ship my crew to the *Greyhound,* take her through the inlet, cross the sound, go up the river, lay the blockade-runner alongside the *Ellen* under pretence of bringing her the guns, and take her by boarding."

"That's very well, indeed, so far as it goes," said the commodore, smiling at his eager subordinate, "but what will you do then?"

"Bring out the privateer, sir."

"But if you cannot?"

"Destroy her."

"How will you get back, then?"

"I'll not be thinking of getting back in that case, sir," answered Mr. Smith gravely.

"But you must," said the commodore impressively. "It will be touch and go at best, but I do not wish to throw away any men or lives if I can help it. Besides, the more honor to you and to us all if you bring her out. I hardly suppose you can do that, but certainly you must do your best to get back safely."

"I shall, sir."

"I sent for you thus early," continued the commodore, "that you might have ample time to mature your plans. We ought to fall in with the fleet day after to-morrow. The *Greyhound* isn't expected for a week. Our privateering captain evidently thought himself at liberty to cruise on his own hook for a few days before he attempted to deliver his message, and came to grief, luckily for us. That's all."

"Beg pardon, sir," said Mr. Smith, "but may I have the letter?"

"Certainly," said Commodore Paulding, handing it to him with the half chart. "Don't lose it. It's a valuable document."

Smith, with his pulses throbbing, his heart beating, took the papers and walked out of the cabin. The *Ellen!* And he was going to capture her! The privateer, not the woman. Well, it would go hard if in the mêlée he did not get a chance at the woman as well as at the privateer.

CHAPTER III

THE PLAN THAT DID NOT WORK

Fortune favored Smith. Fortune seems to have a weakness for the Smith family, paralleled only by a similar feeling for the Jones family—there are so many of both in the world, and playing great parts too! If fortune had not been kind to them, they would have died out long since, as other great families have become extinct.

The *St. Lawrence* fell in with the flag-officer the day after she sank the *Petrel.* The fleet was busy at its anchorage off Old Point Comfort, getting ready for an expedition, presumably destined against the forts guarding Hatteras Inlet, the first naval objective of the war. Among the vessels assembled there was a small schooner which had been a revenue-cutter, the *Upshur.* This vessel happened to be an exact model of the *Petrel.*

The flag-officer entered heartily into the plans of Commodore Paulding. The *Upshur* was turned over to the *St. Lawrence,* Smith was given command of her with fifty gallant tars from the old frigate, with Midshipmen Brown and Robinson as his assistants, and old Bob Gantlin, chief factotum, for a crew. It was a hard task to reject the three hundred and fifty-odd men, volunteers all, who begged to accompany

the chosen fifty from the crew of the *St. Lawrence.*

The flag-officer did more than Commodore Paulding suggested, or even desired. Paulding had determined to support the attack himself with his sailing frigate. Very dubious, in spite of the successful ruse by which the *Petrel* had been overcome, as to the suitability of the old frigate for such duty, and very desirous of apprehending the *Greyhound,* ruse or no ruse, the flag-officer decided to assign to the duty the new and extremely fast gunboat *Wamego.* It was believed that nothing on the ocean had the heels of the *Wamego,* fresh from the shipyard. She had shown marvellous speed on her trial trip, and it would be a greyhound indeed which could run away from her.

Commodore Paulding was given command of the ill-assorted squadron, and the three vessels got away three days after the capture of the *Petrel.* Their uniforms had been taken from the surviving officers of the Confederate schooner and had been donned, so far as they went around, by the corresponding officers of the *Upshur.* Someone had been careful to secure the Confederate flag and the private signals from the sinking *Petrel* before she went down. Sailors' eyes are keen for details, and many had marked the way the privateer had been painted, so that it was easy to duplicate her outward appearance. It would need a very near inspection indeed to show that the *Upshur* was not what she purported to be.

The commodore disposed his ships in the following manner: the *St. Lawrence* hull down to the north-

ward of Ocracoke Inlet, the *Wamego* hull down to the southward, and the *Upshur* immediately off the entrance. There was nothing to do thereafter but wait. Two days after they arrived at their appointed stations the lookout who was kept constantly at the fore cross-trees on the *Upshur* sighted a steamer early in the morning.

Referring to his letter, which, indeed, he had studied until he knew it by heart, Smith struck his light sails—he would have to effect the capture by strategy, not by speed, if the approaching stranger proved to be the *Greyhound*—retaining just enough sail to give his vessel steerage way, and hoisted the agreed signals by which the *Greyhound,* if such she were, could recognize the *Petrel.* The *St. Lawrence* and the *Wamego* were well out of sight in the misty morning.

The schooner had been observed by the approaching steamer, which did not alter its course on that account. There was no harm to be expected from a small sailing schooner by a blockade-runner, and as the *Greyhound* was looking for just such a vessel in order to get pilotage through the inlet, across the sound, and up to Jones' Wharf, she came on hopefully and fearlessly. Her captain, however, was greatly pleased when he saw the private signal flying from the foretopmast head of the schooner. He immediately set the answering signal in accordance with the agreement, and, having approached within hailing distance, he slowed down and stopped.

"What schooner is that?" he called out.

"The Confederate privateer schooner *Petrel*," shouted Smith, his voice thrilling with excitement. "What ship is that?"

"The blockade-runner *Greyhound*," answered the captain of the other vessel.

"Good! We've been waiting for you for nearly a week."

"Have you anything for us?"

"Yes," answered Smith, "we're ready to pilot you in."

"How's the *Ellen?*"

"She's in fine shape," answered Smith; "only waiting for her guns to go out and give those damned Yankees——"

Just then a woman stepped to the side of the deck by the captain.

"You know what!" continued Smith, waving his hand.

The captain laughed, when Smith continued,—

"I'll come aboard you in a minute."

While this little conversation had taken place one of the *Upshur's* boats had been called away. Six men, all heavily armed, dropped into it. In the stern-sheets sat Midshipman Brown. Midshipman Robinson and Bob Gantlin were to remain in charge of the schooner. As the *Greyhound* approached, the tarpaulin covering the long Tom on the forecastle of the *Upshur* had been removed, the gun had been loaded, and everything made ready for its instant discharge. The smaller guns in broadside were also loaded and lightly secured. The men left on the

schooner had been instructed previously just what to do in various contingencies, when Smith, in the uniform of a Confederate officer, stepped over the low rail and sat down in the stern-sheets of the boat.

In three minutes his boat was brought to alongside the blockade-runner. The English captain, whose name was Evers, met him at the gangway as he boarded her.

"Captain Stanley, I believe," he said, extending his hand.

Stanley was the name of the Confederate captain of the *Petrel*, for whom Evers was looking out.

"The same," said Smith gravely, motioning his men to come on board.

The first one had scarcely set his foot on the battens on the side, however, when the woman who had stood by the side of the captain during the hailing, and had kept back of him during the conversation at the gangway, suddenly stepped into full view of the *Greyhound's* visitor. Smith turned at the same instant and the two were face to face. The woman screamed.

"Mr. Smith! Captain Evers, you are betrayed! This is a Yankee!"

As soon as Ellen Jones had called out, Captain Evers, who was a quick thinker for an Englishman, realized that something was seriously wrong. He acted with the promptness of a sailor. The head of the first of the boat's crew was just peering through the gangway. Without a second's hesitation Evers, who was a powerful man, seized him by the shoulder

and heaved him overboard. The man in the bow of the boat below was so astonished that he let go the ring-bolt with his boat-hook and a wave washed the bow of the boat a few feet from the blockade-runner.

Brushing aside Ellen Jones as if she had been a straw,—indeed, his impetuosity almost threw her to the deck, for she reeled back against the fife-rail,—Smith sprang at the captain. The two were locked in a desperate struggle in an instant.

"Four bells!" shouted the captain, straining like a madman in the arms of the American. "Full speed ahead!"

"On board here, everybody!" roared Smith in the midst of the struggle.

Other officers on the *Greyhound,* however, had marked everything that happened. The first mate was a renegade Yankee and as keen as they make them. At the first indication of treachery he had signalled the engine-room. The screw was already in revolution and the *Greyhound* began to forge through the water. Mr. Brown here made a mistake. He stopped to pick up the man the captain of the blockade-runner had thrown overboard. By the time he had the astonished sailor safe in his boat the *Greyhound* was in rapid motion, and he could not overhaul her.

Meanwhile half a dozen sailors had thrown themselves upon Smith and had dragged him from the captain. All was not yet lost, however, Smith had prepared for the contingency which had arisen by certain orders which he had given to Midshipman

Robinson. These orders were being carried out. A huddle of men forward on the *Upshur* were swinging the long thirty-two pound pivot. Whitley, the Yankee, was watching them, however.

"Captain Evers," he cried, "they're goin' to fire on us with their long gun!"

It happened that a couple of rifles lay on the cuddy hatch-cover aft. Someone had been shooting that morning. Evers was a dead shot. He ran aft and picked up one of the weapons. The *Greyhound* was going faster every moment. The seriousness of the emergency had been communicated to the engineers below and they were working for dear life. Fast as they might go, however, they were still within easy range of the thirty-two and would be for some time. A well-placed shot would end the usefulness of the *Greyhound* in short order.

Getting the thirty-two pounder trained to his satisfaction, Midshipman Robinson squinted along the breech for a last nicety of elevation before pulling the lock-string. At that instant Captain Evers fired. He had a small enough mark at which to aim, the top of the midshipman's head, and his nerves had not quite steadied themselves since his encounter with Smith, but his aim was sufficiently good. He just grazed the head of young Robinson, knocking him senseless. As the young man fell he involuntarily pulled the lockstring. The shell exploded in the water far to the leeward of the *Greyhound*. The people on her imagined the midshipman had been killed.

The boatswain, however, was equal to the emergency. He rallied the men on the forecastle of the *Upshur* in a moment. The gun was rapidly sponged, loaded, and once more aimed at the flying steamer. Evers fired at the gun captain again. This time he missed. The thirty-two pound shell exploded high in the air, carrying away the long, slender foretopmast of the blockade-runner. One or two of her people were hit by fragments of iron, but she was otherwise unharmed.

By this time she was doing justice to the name she bore. She was slipping through the water at a terrific pace. The third shot from the *Upshur* hulled her, but, luckily for her, the shell failed to explode. The fourth shot missed, the fifth fell astern. The blockade-runner was out of range.

The *Greyhound* had been heading straight out to sea to get away from the pressing stranger. So soon as he was satisfied that he had nothing to fear from the schooner, Captain Evers consulted with Whitley as to what he should do next. He could either go back, out to sea, or to the northward, or to the southward along the coast. He was in a dilemma, as was the mate also, as to which would be the best course.

"Perhaps I can help you," said the young lady whose quickness had saved him. "I know these coasts thoroughly. If you go to the north, you will be apt to meet a Yankee cruiser off Hatteras Inlet. Ten miles farther down there is another entrance to the sound through which I think we might manage to scrape our way."

"You saved us once, Miss Ellen," said Evers. "I want to thank you for telling us so quickly about this Yankee. Your advice is good. To the s'uth'ard we'll go."

So to the southward the prow of the *Greyhound* was turned. Far in rear of her and dropping farther behind every minute came the *Upshur,* now with all sail set. Although it was perfectly useless, she kept up a fire at long intervals from her long gun forward. Not a shot came near the blockade-runner, however, and, with her people full of glee at their escape, the *Greyhound* ripped merrily along.

CHAPTER IV

THE PLAN THAT DID

"Now, sir," said the captain, turning to the unfortunate Smith so soon as he had a moment's leisure, "perhaps you will have the kindness to explain your extraordinary proceeding."

The American officer had been held firmly by three sailors on the *Greyhound*. So soon as he had discovered that it was useless he had ceased to struggle. He was a wise young man and knew when was the time for a policy of non-resistance. So long as there was a chance of the *Upshur* sinking the Confederate vessel he had devoted his attention to her. Now that the *Greyhound* had made her escape he devoted his attention to Ellen Jones. It was not thus he had hoped to meet her again. When she had confronted him on the deck of the ship his surprise at sight of her had been so great that for the moment he had lost his presence of mind. If he had acted more quickly, he might have got his crew aboard, in which case there would have been a pretty mêlée on the decks with the chance that the *Upshur* could run down the *Greyhound* and end it all with her superior crew. That moment of startled surprise in which Miss Ellen had burst upon him had proved his undoing: not the first time in history that a woman had brought about such a result.

During the first few moments of the sharp engagement Miss Ellen also had watched the schooner. She had grown deadly white when Captain Evers' first shot knocked over the midshipman. This indeed was war, and the sight was not pleasant to her. But she recovered from the shock presently, and when the escape of the *Greyhound* appeared assured, and Captain Evers prepared to interrogate his prisoner, she stepped to his side.

"The explanation, Captain Evers," replied Smith courteously,—there was nothing to be gained by discourtesy and Mr. Smith was a very polite young man anyhow,—"is simple. We captured the *Petrel* a week ago. We found out you were coming in and lay in wait for you. That's all."

"How did you find out we were coming, may I ask?"

"There was a letter to you on board with signals, directions for pilotage, and half a chart."

"They did not destroy the mail-bag then?"

"They tried to, but I—we secured it."

"Too bad. Where was the other half of the chart of which you speak?" asked the captain curiously.

Naturally, Smith was looking at the woman before him. At the mention of the half chart and the captain's question he noticed a quick, involuntary movement of Miss Ellen's hand toward her bosom.

"I don't know," he answered, quickly looking away and hoping that the girl had not noticed his glance.

"Is that the *Petrel* yonder?" asked Evers, point-

ing aft toward the pursuing schooner fast dropping from view.

"No. I don't mind telling you that either. We sunk the *Petrel.* That schooner yonder is the United States revenue-cutter *Upshur.*"

"She's the living picture of the *Petrel,* though, according to my description of her," said Captain Evers.

"She is. In fact, she's a sister ship, and we did our best to turn her into an exact duplicate of the *Petrel.* We were laying for you. Not so much for you as——"

He stopped quickly. There was no use in telling about his designs against the privateer. The game had only begun, and no one could foresee the end yet.

"Don't disdain us, young man," laughed Captain Evers. He was in high good-humor because of his escape from so formidable a trap. "We'd be worth nigh to a hundred thousand pounds, I take it, to your Yankee cruisers, to say nothing of the guns for the *Ellen,* if you could overhaul us. Well, you would have had us sure if it hadn't been for this young lady."

"I realize perfectly," said Mr. Smith, with a grave bow toward her, "all that you and I owe to this young lady."

At this a pang of regret shot through the heart of the fair Miss Ellen. Her lover looked so melancholy and miserable. Almost for a second she wished she had not interfered. The emotion was more than

transitory too. Ellen was devoted to her father, but cared little for the Southern Confederacy. She was not Southern born, nor was he. He lived there, however, and, like many people in similar circumstances, he drifted with the State. He had resigned his command in the army before the war. He was not a native of the United States and, naturally enough, did not care particularly for the country. He was a shrewd man. He saw, or thought he saw, abundant opportunities for making money out of the war, hence his outfitting this privateer.

Having considerable money on hand just before the outbreak of the war, he had bought a new and very swift vessel, which he intended to use, with others in which he had an interest, in the cotton trade. Being a farseeing man, even before hostilities commenced, he had determined, so soon as war was declared, to turn his steamer into a privateer and blockade-runner and prey on the Federal commerce. He had promptly ordered a new and expensive armament for her in England, which had been sent to New Providence, in the Bahamas, and which the *Greyhound* was bringing thence. He had a large interest in the cargo of that blockade-runner as well. He was a thrifty man and loved to turn a penny.

New Providence being an English settlement, Major Jones happened to have relatives living there. His daughter had been spending several months in that place. She was a woman of unusual capacity, and her father had taken advantage of her presence there to transact a large part of his business through

her. It was she who had paid for and received the armament of her namesake; it was she who had arranged for its shipment, and she was now actually in charge of the *Greyhound*—strange position for a young lady! Of course, upon Captain Evers and his mates were devolved the duties of sailing the ship and delivering the cargo, but she, representing the owner, was supreme in other matters. Therefore, although he did not realize it, it was really she who had captured Mr. Smith rather than Captain Evers.

"Well," said the captain, "you made a brave attempt and failed handsomely."

"No thanks to you, Captain."

"What's that?"

"It was entirely due, as I said, to this young lady."

"I—I—am very sorry," began Miss Ellen.

"What!" exclaimed the captain, looking hard at her. "Come, now, Miss Ellen! You're not sorry that you were not captured, surely! Why, that would about ruin your father, I take it. He owns most of this cargo, and without the guns we're fetching him the *Ellen* wouldn't be worth—what do you call it?—a cent."

"Certainly I am not sorry about that, but I feel very sorry for Mr. Smith. I knew him before the war, when my father was in the army. We're old friends."

"Thank you," said Smith gratefully.

"Friendship played you a sorry trick then," said the English captain.

"I could not help it," exclaimed Miss Ellen indignantly, as if she sought to justify her action to her lover.

"I don't blame you, Miss Ellen," put in Smith promptly, "you did what was right, as you always do."

Though he had failed for the present in his main end, perhaps he might get something out of the adventure after all, if nothing more than the commiseration of Miss Ellen. He had heard that pity was akin to love, and perhaps if he could not secure one Ellen, he might in some way, even though conquered, capture the other.

"Nevertheless, I am sorry that it had to be you," she continued.

"It's very good of you to say that," he replied gravely, "but I have no fault to find. I'm glad it was I rather than another. I have the pleasure of seeing you again, and that is much. If you had kept still a moment longer my men would have been on board and I would have been your host instead of——"

"My prisoner," laughed Captain Evers.

"Not at all, Captain Evers," interrupted Miss Ellen with spirit, "it is my desire that you extend to Lieutenant Smith every courtesy. Let him be here as our guest."

"Oh, very well," said the captain indifferently, "just as you say. It won't be very long, anyhow, before we get in, I trust, and then he'll be a prisoner of war. For the present you can have the run of the ship, Mr. Smith."

"Steamer ahead!" shouted a man on the lookout forward.

"Where away?" called out the captain, turning from the other two and running forward.

"Ah!" ejaculated Smith, "that'll be my chance."

"I don't understand," said Miss Ellen.

"Right ahead, sir, coming down fast!" called out the lookout.

"By George!" cried Captain Evers, after springing up the foreshrouds and taking a long look through his glass, "that'll be a Yankee cruiser certainly. Port your helm!" he shouted, "hard aport! Lay her head due east! Lively, men!"

He came jumping down the rigging and ran aft to see that his orders were promptly obeyed. In a few moments the *Greyhound* swept around and once more headed due east into the broad Atlantic whence she had come. It was the only thing she could do then. The schooner in her wake had edged out to sea. It was impossible for the blockade-runner to head north or hug the shore in an effort to make the inlet without coming in range of the *Upshur's* heavy gun. There was only one course open to her, and that was to run to seaward. The steamship they had just sighted was running down upon them at a rapid rate. So soon as her people discovered the *Greyhound's* attempt to get to sea they altered the course of their own vessel, laid her head to the northeast, so that she ran along the hypothenuse while the *Greyhound* took one side of a right-angled triangle.

Captain Evers was a resourceful man and he de-

cided, so soon as he got a sufficient offing, to clear the schooner to port, to change his course to the northeast so as to bring the pursuing stranger directly in rear of him and thus give him a better chance of escaping her. Just when he was about to do this, however, his lookout reported another sail ahead.

That other sail was the frigate *St. Lawrence.* As was the custom, the two supporting ships, the frigate and the steamer, had closed in on the schooner during the night. Had it not been for the misty morning they would have been in sight of her when she had her brush with the *Greyhound.* As it was, the men on both ships plainly heard the sound of the firing. That it was continued was evidence that the blockade-runner had not succeeded in gaining the inlet and was running away.

Commodore Paulding had reasoned out the course of the *Greyhound* exactly. She would turn south and run into the *Wamego.* When pursued by the *Wamego* she would swing to the northeast. Therefore, instead of running down the coast in the wake of the schooner, he had flung every stitch of canvas on the yards of the old hooker, including studding sails—the wind was a fine royal breeze—and had legged it for the southeastward in the hope of heading off the *Greyhound* when she turned away from the gunboat, thus giving the *Wamego* a better chance to overhaul her.

In the hazard of the chase Captain Evers now did not dare take any risks. All the new screw sloops-

of-war he knew were full ship rigged and it might be that the stranger in the northeast racing along under a great press of canvas would prove to be the *Hartford* or the *Brooklyn* or one of the sister ships, although he did not think so. He stared at her for a while, when Commodore Paulding, who was a wonderfully tricky old sailor, added the last touch of deceit to his ship.

He piled barrels up amidships forward of the mainmast to look like a rude smokestack and made a smudge at the bottom of them. Black clouds of smoke came pouring out of the top. That was enough for poor Evers. He swung the *Greyhound* slightly away to the southward to get out of the enclosing net. Really, he had nothing to fear from any of his pursuers except the *Wamego,* but he could take no chances.

There had been no hesitation about the movements of the Union gunboat. Her captain knew exactly what he wanted,—the *Greyhound,*—and he stuck to his course without deviation. Evers saw that his pursuer was fearfully near by the time his manœuvres had been completed, and she had settled on her course and was coming along like a hurricane. Nor did the *Greyhound* belie her name. She was a remarkably swift goer, and this time she was going for all there was in her. They fed her furnaces with rosin and tar. They battened down the safety-valves. Mr. Whitley, the mate, took the helm, but try as they might she lost ground steadily.

Smith stood on the quarter-deck a highly interested

spectator of the pursuit. Near him Miss Ellen Jones also critically examined the chasing steamer. But little had been said between these two during these exciting manœuvres. Their position was strange and unusual. Smith had a thousand things he would like to say to the woman he loved, but under the circumstances he felt that the initiative should come from her, more especially as he was her prisoner—although that would soon be changed. Unless something unforeseen happened he knew what would be the result of the chase. It was evident to everybody that the *Wamego* had the heels of the *Greyhound*, and that unless something gave way a few hours would see the blockade-runner overhauled and captured.

The two stood in constrained silence for a long time. The captain and his officers devoted themselves to the working of the ship and left them alone and undisturbed. Finally, Smith broke the awkward pause himself in despair of getting a word from her.

"Well, Miss Ellen," he said, "the gunboat is overhauling us."

"I see," answered that young lady anxiously. "You won't be my prisoner very long."

"I should like to be your prisoner always," retorted the man tritely but naturally.

"But not in the sense in which I first spoke?"

"In any sense."

"How long is it since—since you—since we met?"

"Nearly four years, Miss Ellen, but I have never ceased to think of you—to love you in all that time."

"What! for four years?" laughed the girl, her pulses bounding.

"If it had been four hundred years, it would have been just the same."

"You are a miracle for a sailor. I thought they had sweethearts in every port?"

"I had one."

"What, sir!"

"It was always you, Miss Ellen."

"Thank you," she laughed. "That was prettily said. I am afraid that's the way they all explain it."

"It's true in my case, anyway. Do you know why I volunteered for this duty?—why I embraced it so gladly?"

"I suppose it was for the sake of capturing this blockade-runner and——"

"It was for your sake."

"How for mine?"

"I wanted to capture first the *Greyhound,* then your father's privateer, and most of all, you!"

"The *Ellen?*" she answered, disregarding this last remark.

"Yes, the *Ellen,* if you put it that way."

"You mean the privateer?"

"I mean you."

"But you will never capture——" She stopped.

"Never capture which?" he asked.

"The privateer or——"

"Don't say that, Miss Ellen."

"I will say it! Or me either!"

"If I mistake not," returned the young man coolly, casting a glance astern, "I shall have captured you in about half an hour."

"How dare you say such a thing!" cried the girl indignantly.

"I mean just what I say. That steamer yonder is the United States ship *Wamego*. She was stationed there to help me carry out this plan. So soon as she overhauls and takes possession of this ship I shall be in command of the *Greyhound* and all on board of her."

"It is outrageous!" exclaimed the girl, her cheeks flushing.

"I shall treat you, I assure you, with the same kindly consideration which you extended to me. You shall be my guest, as I have been yours."

"I will not stay on this ship with you a moment! I will board one of the other ships!"

"I wouldn't if I were you," said Smith, smiling genially; "you see, those are cruising vessels. They wouldn't care to have a woman aboard—there are no conveniences for women passengers. They might not get a chance to land you for a month. I can put you ashore at your father's plantation."

"I don't care what you say, or what you offer to do, I won't stay on the ship with you, sir!"

"Did you ever hear, Miss Jones," continued Smith, still smiling pleasantly, "that prisoners of war must go where they are sent or stay where they are ordered?"

"Captain Evers," cried the girl imperiously, "I

wish you would remove this prisoner at once! Put him in a cell, anywhere, out of my sight! He annoys me."

The troubled Evers looked from the girl, who deliberately turned her back upon him, to the smiling face of the young man.

"By all means, Captain," said Smith cheerfully, "do just what you like with me. Only I warn you that when you are overhauled by the steamer the treatment you mete out to me will be your portion."

"Well, you see, Miss Jones," began the puzzled captain dubiously, "unless something happens we'll all be in this gentleman's power in a short time."

"Speak for yourself, Captain Evers," retorted Miss Ellen haughtily.

"But, Miss Ellen, I'm afraid it's true, and——"

"I shall go below myself then!" stormed the girl, "since nobody here pays any attention to my requests."

"That's all right, Captain," said Smith carelessly, as the young lady stalked away and descended to her cabin, "don't mind her. She'll get over it presently. As for you, you know you have no chance at all to get away from yonder ship."

"What ship is it?" asked Evers.

"The United States gunboat *Wamego*."

"I see."

"I advise you to slow down and let her overhaul you without any further fuss. You're just wearing out your engines carrying on in this way."

"I'll be damned if I will!" said the captain hotly.

"You'll be sunk if you don't. Look yonder."

He pointed as he spoke. There was a flash of light from the deck of the pursuing steamer, a puff of white smoke, the scream of a shell, which exploded in the water close aboard.

"That's good practice, Captain," continued Smith coolly. "There's another. You'd better stop in time. The third one will come aboard and somebody will be apt to get hurt. Here, I'll save you the disgrace of striking your flag. Surrender to me."

"Curse the luck, I suppose I'll have to," said Evers desperately, throwing his cap to the deck in his disgust and turning away in deep dejection.

"Very good," said Smith, "the ship is mine then."

He ran to the peak halliards a few steps from him and struck the flag. He was just in time, for the gunners on the *Wamego* were about to send another shell from the hundred-pound pivot, this time into the quarter of the *Greyhound.* So soon as he hauled down the flag Smith ran forward to the break of the poop and signalled the engineers below to slow down. At the same time he ordered them to blow off steam and haul the fires. If the engines had been stopped abruptly under such a head of steam the consequences might have been serious. Then he ordered the quartermaster at the wheel to put the helm up, and the *Greyhound* swung around and slowly moved toward the *Wamego,* whose way was also checked. The blockade-runner was captured, after all.

CHAPTER V

THE BEGINNING OF THE GREAT ADVENTURE

So soon as it was safe the *Greyhound* stopped in obedience to signal. The *Wamego* ran alongside and Captain Chase dispatched a boat to the blockade-runner in charge of Lieutenant Dillingham. Mr. Dillingham's boat came to the side in a hurry. He and his men scrambled impetuously up the gangway as if they expected to meet with a furious resistance before they gained the deck, although they knew she had struck. They were apparently disappointed to find everything as quiet and peaceful as a country churchyard. Mr. Smith encountered them at the gangway. As it happened, Mr. Dillingham and he had never met before. As Smith was still wearing the Confederate uniform he had donned, the boarding officer naturally mistook him for the blockade-runner's captain. He saluted him gravely and asked,—

"Are you the captain of this ship, sir?"

"I am, sir."

"I am Lieutenant Dillingham, of the United States gunboat *Wamego,* and I have come to take possession."

"You have, eh?" said Smith, smiling. "Well, I guess not."

"What do you mean?"

"I am in possession of this vessel and I intend to remain so."

"If this is a jest, sir," said Dillingham gravely, "it is a very poor one. You are under the guns of the *Wamego,* you have struck your flag, and if you do not instantly yield me possession I shall proceed to take it by force."

"Why should I yield possession?" laughed Smith, who was fond of joking.

"Because you're a rebel and have been captured."

"I'm not a rebel."

"I don't care what you are. You're my prisoner."

"See here now, Dillingham——"

"Mr. Dillingham, sir. I've had enough of this." He turned to his men. "Just walk this gentleman aft, will you?"

"Well, if this isn't the most unkind treatment that an officer of the United States Navy ever received at the hands of his friends!" protested Smith quietly.

"An officer of the United States Navy!" exclaimed the astonished boarder. "Who are you, anyway?"

"Lieutenant Thomas Beekman Smith, executive officer of the *St. Lawrence,* lately in command of the United States schooner *Upshur,* and now in charge of this ship."

"Great Heaven! why didn't you say so before?"

"You didn't ask me, my young friend," answered

Smith calmly. "You didn't give me a chance. You were going to take possession of me without giving me an opportunity to explain to you."

"But where are your men?" asked Dillingham, looking around curiously.

"I have none."

"Do you mean to tell me that you have captured this ship single-handed?"

"Absolutely alone," responded Smith coolly. "I didn't even have a weapon, as you see. The enemy yielded to moral suasion, wholly and solely. I guess I charmed them with my beauty." He shook his red head and freckled face in front of the other. "Seriously, though," he added, taking pity on the mystification of the young officer, "when they saw it was all up with them they kindly struck to me. If it hadn't been for you fellows on the *Wamego* I would have been looking forward to a rebel prison by this time."

"How did you get aboard?"

In a few brief words Smith explained the situation.

"So the lady betrayed you?"

"She did," answered the other quietly.

"Well," said Dillingham, "you have a chance to get even now."

"I have," returned Lieutenant Smith.

"Is there anything I can do for you?"

"With the lady?"

"No, with the prize. I wash my hands of women," continued the blasé young boarding-officer—he had

just turned twenty-two, and therefore knew everything there was to be known about the mysterious sex.

"Plenty," said Smith. "If you please, we'll secure the *Greyhound's* crew, overhaul the ship's papers, and lie to until the commodore comes up with the old wagon yonder, and my detachment joins me from the little *Upshur*, off here."

The *Upshur* was still racing along far away. She had stopped firing her gun at last. She and the *St. Lawrence* were both coming up rapidly. There was enough work to occupy the two officers and their men until the commodore arrived. The crew of the *Greyhound* was assembled forward. The officers were sent to their cabins and the papers were examined. With these various duties the time rapidly passed until the old frigate hove to alongside within easy hailing distance.

"Have you got her?" asked Commodore Paulding, standing on the weather rail.

To this utterly unnecessary question Smith replied in the affirmative.

"It was touch and go, however, Commodore," he called across the narrow space. "If it hadn't been for the *Wamego* yonder, the *Greyhound* would have got away from us, taking me along."

"How is that, sir?" roared the commodore.

"It's a long story, sir. I'm coming aboard immediately and I'll tell you then."

Leaving Mr. Dillingham in charge of the prize, Smith was presently rowed to the frigate.

"Well, sir," he said, as he saluted the commodore, "I want to congratulate you, Commodore, on the richest prize that has been taken in this war. That ship and her cargo ought to total up something like four hundred thousand dollars. Beside the armament for the *Ellen,* she's crammed to the hatches with military supplies, stores, medical stuff, clothing, everything that could be of value to the rebels."

"Good!" said the old commodore, "we owe it all to you."

"No, sir. You owe very little to me."

"How is that?"

"I sighted the blockade-runner from the *Upshur* early this morning, set the private signals, and carried out the programme just as we had arranged it, until it came to the boarding part."

"You got aboard, though?"

"Yes, sir, but I hadn't more than put my foot on the deck when someone on the *Greyhound* recognized me. The captain, a handy man with his fists and as quick with his wits, threw overboard the bluejacket following me. I grappled with the captain instantly and called for our men to board, but in the confusion the boat had gone adrift from the steamer. They got way on the ship immediately and by the time I had the captain down she was skipping along at a terrific rate. The boat could not get alongside again. They made some good practice with the pivot on the *Upshur,* but did no damage. By the way, sir, I have to report that Midshipman Robinson was shot by a rifle in the hands of Captain Evers

while he was trying to fire the pivot. If it hadn't been for that the *Upshur* might have got her, or sunk her, alone."

"Beg pardon, sir," interrupted a midshipman at this moment, "officer of the deck's compliments, sir, and he says to tell you that the *Upshur* is alongside and reports that Midshipman Robinson is slightly wounded, no other casualties."

"That's lucky for Captain Evers," said Commodore Paulding grimly. "Go on, Mr. Smith."

"There's no more to tell, sir," said Smith.

"You have forgotten one item, though," said the old man; "who was it recognized you?"

"A lady, sir."

"God bless my soul! What lady?"

"Miss Jones, sir."

"What, Miss Ellen?" laughed the commodore.

"The same."

"Well, that was hard luck."

"I'll call it very good luck, indeed, sir, if you will permit me," said Smith gravely, "so long as the *Greyhound* was captured eventually."

"Explain yourself," said Paulding.

"Well, sir, I don't mind telling you that I have been very much interested in Miss Jones for—for years."

"A constant sailor!" exclaimed the old commodore, smiling. "They didn't make 'em in my day."

"I have no doubt we have degenerated since that time, sir," returned the lieutenant, smiling in his turn. "I don't mind telling you, either, that her

father will have none of me. Now that I have captured the ship, I shall have a chance to—er——"

"But you surely won't take the young lady with you when you cut out the privateer?"

"No, sir—at least, not exactly. Just before the fun begins I'll land her at some convenient place where she will be safe and can reach her father's plantation without difficulty."

"But—with your permission, of course, since you are an interested party," laughed the commodore, "perhaps it would be better to have her on the frigate."

"That wouldn't do at all, sir," returned Smith eagerly; "you may not make a harbor for a month, and I'm sure you wouldn't care to hold a young lady a prisoner of war."

"Are there any other women or passengers on that blockade-runner?" asked Paulding, intent upon the proprieties.

"Her maid and several other servants, I believe, sir."

"Oh, very well, have it your own way. I suppose you want to cut out both Ellens in the same job. But mark this, young man. Remember that the *Ellen*—the privateer, I mean—is the prime object of your endeavors, not the lady."

"I shall remember, sir."

"Have you any further suggestions or requests?"

"Yes, sir," answered Smith. "I think it would be well to trans-ship the cargo of the *Greyhound*. We have three vessels here and they can take the

most valuable portion of it, so that if anything happens when I fall in with the privateer you'll still have something for your pains. We're not pressed for time, I take it, to get at the privateer. She is helpless until we go in. The weather is pleasant and bids fair to remain so. The trans-shipment of the prize cargo should not be difficult."

"All right," answered the commodore, "I'll attend to that matter at once. It's a good suggestion. Now, then, how many men will you want to go with you?"

"The fifty men that you detailed to the *Upshur* will be enough. There won't be much fighting, I imagine, but after we carry the *Ellen* we'll have to move quickly and I shall want enough hands to take both ships out easily."

"What will you do for a pilot?"

"I've thought of that," answered Smith promptly. "You recall that half a chart was enclosed in the letter?"

"But what can you do with half a chart?"

"I think I know where the other half is. If I don't, I'll manage somehow. I'll impress one of the natives and threaten him with instant death unless I am shown the way."

"Very well, Mr. Smith, have the men transshipped from the *Upshur* at once. I will send another crew on board of her. Do you want any more officers?"

"No, sir. If Robinson is all right, he and Brown with old Bob Gantlin will be all that I require."

"Good," said Commodore Paulding, "I shall support you so far as I can with the frigate and the gunboat, and if you're not out, or if I hear nothing from you in two days, I'll send the gunboat into the sound, so far as is safe, on the chance that I may save some of you or help you to get away in boats. Do your best. Remember that the destruction of the *Ellen* is a matter of great importance to the country. At whatever hazard, she must be prevented from getting away. Save yourself and your men if possible and —hark you—don't let a woman get athwart your hawse!"

"No, sir," answered Smith.

"By the way, you will need a couple of engineers. Ask Captain Chase to detail two skilled machinists from the *Wamego* for that purpose."

"Yes, sir."

"I'll send a heavy detail over to the prize at once to unlade the cargo. You look after the job. First of all, we'll take the captured crew on board the *St. Lawrence*."

In a short time the sea was white with boats busy about the various details of trans-shipping the cargo of the prize to the other ships. For two days the work continued. Fortunately the cargo was of such a character that there was little difficulty in breaking it out and trans-shipping it to the other vessels, and, fortunately also, the weather served them.

Miss Ellen, who with her black maid and two black men-servants remained on the *Greyhound,* kept closely in her state-room during the whole period.

She had protested against the orders that detained her on board the blockade-runner. She had demanded to see Commodore Paulding. Having squared matters with that gentleman beforehand, the inexorable Smith had refused to entertain her protest or to grant her request. The young lady had never been so commanded before and was forced to endure her situation, which she did with a very ill grace, to be sure. After one stormy interview—stormy on her part, that is—she positively refused to see her lover again. Her meals were served to her in her cabin. She did not even come up on deck to get a breath of fresh air. All communication with her was through her maid.

Mr. Smith was a very busy man during the two days, and being something of a philosopher he reasoned that it was just as well the woman should be out of the way,—under the circumstances,—so he had not sought energetically to disturb her until the morning of the third day. All preparations having been completed, the engines were started and the *Greyhound*, much lighter than she had been before, moved toward the inlet, which gave entrance to the sound, on her daring adventure, encouraged in her departure by the cheers of the men of the remaining ships.

For the present Commodore Paulding determined to keep the frigate and the gunboat and the sloop well away from the shore, so as to excite no suspicion in case there should be any lookouts watching for the arrival of the blockade-runner.

Having set the watches and seen that everything was in order, putting Mr. Brown in charge of the deck, the weather being calm and pleasant and nothing to be feared, the coast being some twenty-five miles to the westward, Captain Smith—for so he may now be called by courtesy—went below to his cabin. There he summoned Chloe, Miss Ellen's maid, and directed her to inform her mistress that Captain Smith desired her presence in his cabin.

CHAPTER VI

MISS ELLEN YIELDS TO FORCE ALONE

It had been easy enough for Miss Ellen to immure herself in her state-room as a city of refuge. The gentle urging of her lover that she come forth upon the deck, especially in the evening, when work was in a measure intermitted, had only intensified her determination to stay where she was. Although she was a prisoner, although she had been refused permission to go aboard one of the other ships, although she had not been permitted to see the commanding officer, there was a sense of luxury and satisfaction in the thought that she could, nevertheless, thwart the imperious captain by disregarding his wishes even in small matters.

He had spoken to her outrageously during the chase by the *Wamego*. He had treated her with no consideration afterward,—so she thought,—and she determined to pay him up by being as contrary and as obstinate and as self-willed as possible. When he ceased to ask her to come on deck, however, when he acquiesced in her decision and left her severely alone in her self-enforced isolation, the rôle she was playing lost its charm, and naturally her eagerness to get out of what she now thought of as a hateful little hole increased in proportion to his indifference.

If she could have manufactured an excuse adequate to the complete reversal of her determination, she would have been out long since. Her pride, however, of which she had great stock, kept her in. She went through the whole gamut of possible emotions. First she would and then she wouldn't; then she could and then she couldn't. In the end, torn by all sorts of conflicting feelings, she did nothing. Resentfully, she stayed where she was.

When Chloe delivered the captain's message she received it with an immediate throb of gladness. The longer she was deprived of the sight of her lover, albeit he was not a particularly handsome object, the more she wanted to see him. Again, she didn't know what was going on, exactly, that is, during her seclusion, and as curiosity is nearly as strong in woman as it is in man, she wanted to know where she was to be taken, what was to be done with the ship, and how the *Ellen* was concerned.

Nor was there any satisfaction in thwarting a man who was so hatefully willing to be crossed! That morning, therefore, she had about made up her mind to go on deck, excuse or no excuse. Smith's harmless message instantly changed her decision irrevocably. His authority could be braved, after all, and she would brave it.

"Tell him," she said, shutting her lips tightly together, her blue eyes sparkling with a fire that made them almost black,—violet, I should say, if I were writing romance instead of chronicling facts,—"tell him that I do not wish to see him. That I do not

intend to see him. That I shall stay here in the prison in which he has thrust me until he is ready to put me ashore."

"Yas'm," said Chloe, rolling her eyes at this portentous message, accompanied, as it was, by every mark of indignation and disdain.

"Cap'n Smif, suh, Missy Ell'n, she say she ain't gwine ter come out'n de doah. She doan lak yo'. She doan have nuffin' ter do wid no Yankee po' white trash. She gwine ter stay in dat ar prisom cell twell you-all gwine ter th'o' her on de sho'. She moughty enrage, suh. Yo' betta done lef her 'lone. W'en Missy Ell'n git mad, suh—u-u-m!"

"Did she say those things just as you repeated them?" asked the captain, smiling in glee at the excited sable messenger of his goddess.

"Well, suh, not prezactly dat a-way, but I sensed 'em right, an' I gibs yo' de substantiate of it."

"Did she use the words 'poor white trash'?"

"Yas, suh, she did dat. Golly, she mean 'em too!"

Now the state-room in which Miss Ellen had confined herself opened into the main cabin in which Smith sat. All that was said in the main cabin was distinctly audible in the state-room, and vice versa. As Chloe proceeded solemnly to asseverate that her message had contained the insulting language in question, Miss Ellen could stand it no longer.

"You wretched girl!" she cried vehemently from the recesses of her apartment, "I said nothing of the kind."

"Woman, what do you mean?" thundered Smith, rising and standing over the frightened black woman in a mockery of menace. "Do you not know that I am the captain of this ship? This is rank mutiny! I can hang you to the yardarm for it."

"Oh, fo' de good Lawd's sake, Massa Cap'n, please doan do dat!" groaned the servant, falling on her knees and turning gray with terror.

"Chloe," again interrupted Miss Ellen, pulling aside the curtain that hung before the slatted door through which she could see her woman on her knees before the captain, "get up! He won't hang you. He's only trying to frighten you. Noble work on the part of a sailor, but we might expect that from——"

Captain Smith laughed.

"I spare your life this time, poor, trembling, downtrodden female," he said dramatically, "but beware!"

"Yas, sur, I'll bewah, 'deed I will, sho', suh! Jes' lemme go dis time."

"Go back to your mistress," said the captain gravely, "and tell her that as captain of this ship I order her to appear before me immediately!"

The frightened Chloe, not at all reassured by her mistress' scornful involuntary ejaculation, struggled to her feet and burst into the little state-room again.

"Fo' de Lawd's sake, Missy Ell'n, yo' bettah come right inter de big cabin. Dat outdacious man he say yo' got ter. He done gwine hang me by de t'roat twell I's daid inter de back yard yondah!"

"I made no such threat, woman," called the captain, elevating his voice, "I simply told you to tell your mistress that I commanded her presence here at once."

"Yas, suh. Dat's wa'at I done tole huh," answered the bewildered Chloe.

"Tell him from me," returned Miss Ellen promptly and firmly, "that while he commands the ship, he doesn't command me. I won't come!"

In another moment the trembling Chloe stood before the inexorable captain, who was greatly enjoying the situation.

"Oh, good, kin' Massa Cap'n," began the negress deprecatingly, "dat po' l'i'l lamb yondah, she cain't come, suh, she's sick, suh. She'd lak ter 'bey yo' ordahs, suh, but she's done got dat rheumatics in her laigs an'——"

"Chloe!" cried a scandalized voice from the stateroom, "tell him I won't come and say nothing more."

"Um!" said Smith. "You go back again and tell your mistress that if she doesn't come here willingly I'll have her brought."

"Yo-all betta done come out, Missy Ell'n," said poor Chloe, "er dat man gwine ter have yo' fotched. He sho' 'nough am."

"He doesn't dare," said Miss Ellen in a very loud tone of voice, not choosing to avail herself of Chloe as a further interpreter.

Captain Smith instantly accepted her challenge.

"Orderly!" he called in a loud voice.

A sailor standing outside the door forward in the main bulkhead opened the door, stepped inside, knuckled his forehead, and made a sea-scrape.

"Send me the bo's'n's mate and two seamen here immediately," said Captain Smith.

"Ay, ay, sir."

A few moments after old Bob Gantline, followed by two other seamen, shuffled into the cabin.

"Bos'n's mate," said Smith austerely, pulling out his watch as he spoke, "if by the time I count fifteen the young lady in the starboard cabin yonder is not in this cabin, you and your mates will go in and bring her here. Handle her gently, using as little force as necessary, but do the job up handsomely."

"W'ot! me, sir, lay a feemale aboard, sir!" expostulated the old sailor feebly.

"You heard my orders?"

"In course, sir, but——"

"Well, then, stand by to carry them out."

"Ay, ay, sir," said the gallant old tar thus adjured, his eyes rolling about terrifically at the thought of the dire prospect before him.

"One!" counted the captain, looking solemnly at his watch.

"He would never dare!" murmured Miss Ellen under her breath.

"Two!" said the captain imperturbably.

"I'll die first!" she continued, while the remorseless count went on; but in spite of her agitation she took good care not to lose track of the numbers.

At fifteen the captain closed his watch and nodded.

The old boatswain's mate made a step forward slowly and hesitatingly. He was followed at some distance by the seamen. Evidently they relished their job no more than he did. The big-footed men slowly shuffled across the deck. It seemed to Smith, who was coolly watching the performance, that it would take Gantline and his mates an hour to get to the state-room door at the rate they were travelling. The old man had his right arm extended in front of him as if to ward off some possible attack. He had removed his chew of tobacco before he entered the cabin but his jaws were working as if within them was the usual quid, whether from habit or nervousness could not be told. He shot an appealing glance at the captain, but that young man was unrelenting. He motioned to him to go on.

If there was comedy in the cabin there was tragedy in the state-room. The girl did not believe that such a thing could be possible. That the man who pretended to love her, even if he were captain of the ship, would resort to such an expedient, had seemed incredible, yet now the men were approaching her door. She stood with clenched hands, flushed face, heaving bosom, the picture of indignation tempered with a deadly fear. She would have given a year of her life for a stout, solid door and a lock and key. She waited until the last second during the slow approach of the sailors, hoping that before the seamen entered her state-room Smith would call them back. But no welcome suspension of the order fell upon her ear.

Chloe had sunk to the floor and was sobbing wildly, clinging to her mistress' skirts. Just as Smith had about concluded to stop the boatswain's mate and give it up as a bad job, a self-confessed failure, Miss Ellen's courage gave way, or perhaps it were better to say, under the circumstances, her rage overmastered her. In a perfect tempest of passion she suddenly threw open the door and dashed out.

The boatswain's mate had his hand extended in the very act of turning the knob. Her sudden action completely threw him off his balance. With a howl of terror he went down in a huddled heap on the deck. He would have boarded an ironclad and have enjoyed the chance, but this was more than he could face. As he fell his mates tripped over him and the whole party went reeling back in wild confusion. They didn't stop for orders, for explanations, for anything else. With a wild yell the two seamen bolted out of the cabin door followed by old Gantline on his hands and knees. It was a most ignominious retreat!

Miss Ellen's entrance had been most dramatic. But then the thin division between tragedy and comedy was broken through by the assistance of the unlucky Chloe. As her mistress had stepped through the door she pulled herself away from the terrified maid, but Chloe, thinking perhaps to go to a brave death with her mistress, had lunged after her, fallen at her feet, and again caught her around the skirts. A little pitch of the ship sent Miss Ellen straight

into the arms of the captain. He caught her skilfully and before she knew what he was about he set her down on the transom—rather harder than he had intended, owing to an unlucky roll, it must be admitted. Miss Ellen sat up with a feeling like that of a recalcitrant child who had been violently thrust into a seat.

"This is positively outrageous!" she cried.

"Oh, please, suh, deah, kin' Mass' Cap'n, doan hang us bofe in de back yard, suh," wailed the maid, piteously.

"How dare you!" raged Miss Ellen, furious with anger at the captain.

"Deed, suh, if yo' mus' tek' anybody, forgib dat po' li'l' lam' an' tek——"

"Silence!" cried Miss Ellen. "He's not going to hang you!"

"I ain't ca'in' fo' masef, suh. Ma thought is jes' fo' ma young missy. Ma t'roat am jes' aikin' fo' de rope, suh, eef he'll only lef yo' go, Missy Ell'n."

With a preternaturally grave expression—he was ready to shout with laughter, it was all such fun, but this would have ruined him forever in Miss Ellen's eyes—Captain Smith hauled Chloe to her feet, and telling the frightened servant that no harm would come to her mistress now that she had so graciously complied with his request, he calmed her down and ordered her to leave the cabin.

"Don't go, Chloe," said Miss Ellen sternly.

The captain pointed his inexorable finger at the door.

"'Deed, Missy Ell'n, I's got ter. Can't nobody refudge ter 'bey dat Massa Cap'n."

"You can stay outside within call," said Smith, "I wish to speak to your mistress alone."

Chloe turned and, with a deprecating look at her indignant young mistress, shuffled out of the cabin.

CHAPTER VII

THE DESPERATE DETERMINATION OF THE CAPTAIN

Miss Ellen had risen from the transom, whereon she had been seated, and now confronted her oppressor with the mien of an angry goddess.

Things go by contraries. Never in her life had Miss Ellen looked so nearly beautiful as she did at that moment. Probably never would she look so nearly beautiful again. At least, that was the testimony of her lover. Never, on the contrary, were his homely and commonplace features more clearly realized than during that clashing of wills with the woman he loved. At least, that was what she told herself. Yet while she vowed in her heart that she hated him there was in her mind a certain amount of respect for him for the successful method by which he had extracted her—the word is apposite, it was more like a dental operation than anything else!—from her cabin. As a preliminary to the conversation he resumed his seat at the table and at the same time courteously motioned her to sit down, saying:

"You would better sit down. Our conversation may be extended, and you will get very tired standing up, Miss Ellen."

"You brute!" she cried, "I never was so insulted

in all my life! Those great, hulking men to drag me out!"

"They didn't lay hands on you, did they?"

"If they had, it would go hard with them," said Miss Ellen, glaring at her captor savagely. "If I had a weapon, I'd kill all of you!"

"How fortunate," said Smith persuasively, "that you are armed in beauty and womanhood alone."

An angry flush greeted this courteous and delicate compliment.

"Seriously, though," he continued, "I entreat you to sit down, dear Miss Ellen."

Miss Ellen stared at him in silent contempt for the moment. The wind was freshening; the ship was rocking and pitching quite perceptibly. As she gave no sign of compliance with his request in spite of her unsteady footing, he too arose.

"The pitching of the ship is so great," he remarked, "that I shall probably be under the happy necessity of assisting you to keep your feet if you choose to remain standing. Allow me."

"Anything rather than that," said the perverse young lady, promptly sitting down.

"I thought I could get you down," he retorted with provoking coolness.

"Indeed," she went on hotly, only restrained from bobbing up again by the silliness of such a performance, "I am alone and helpless, you have the brute strength to compel me to obey your command."

"I am glad you appreciate your position, although you state it with unnecessary harshness," said the captain gravely.

"It is the truth that is harsh, not my stating of it," she replied deftly.

"However that may be, Miss Ellen, you must know that I have loved you for four years, and——"

"Did you drag me out here to tell me that?"

"Partly."

"I admire your gentle method of wooing a woman," she replied caustically.

"I am glad it pleases you," he returned smoothly, "for I will admit that my dearest hope is some day to hear you say that you will 'love, honor, and—obey' me at the altar."

"You will never hear me say those words!" stormed Miss Ellen; "and if I can get the ear of any other foolish woman who may be inclined thereto, I shall relate this little scene as an evidence of your character and prevent her, if possible."

"Your solicitude for my future, Miss Ellen——"

"Miss Jones, if you please!"

"Is truly touching. I may not hear you say for some time that you will love, honor, and obey me, but for the present you will do at least one of these things."

"Which one?"

"Obey."

The girl's hands gripped the arms of the chair. She shut her teeth tightly, but made no reply.

"I am hopeful, too," continued Smith with portentous gravity, "even in spite of the disadvantage under which I labor in this interview, that you will also eventually do the other two whether you prom-

ise or not. Indeed, from what I know, I think you do love and honor me just a little bit, don't you?"

"You should not judge from the past," snapped Miss Ellen.

"Oh, then, you did?"

"I hate you now! That's all you need to know."

"That's just what I don't want to know," answered the captain gently and smoothly, "and you will pardon me, I am sure, if I tell you that I don't believe that's quite true."

"Your beliefs, or non-beliefs, are nothing to me. You surely did not have me dragged from the cabin by force to discuss ethical questions of this kind, in which I assure you I have no interest whatever."

"No, you are right, although ethics is always interesting," assented Captain Smith. "I begged you to come out here to——"

"Begged me with a boatswain's mate and two ruffianly sailors," she interrupted scornfully.

"Quite so, poor fellows. Because I wanted a paper you possess."

"What paper?" cried the girl.

"The mate to this," answered the captain, lifting from the table the half chart of the estuary of Pamlico Sound. The original chart had been so torn in two pieces that no one in possession of a single piece could make head or tail of it.

"Where did you get that?" asked the girl impulsively.

"I took it from a letter addressed to Captain Evers, as you heard me say when I boarded the

Greyhound. In the letter was a statement that the other half of the chart was in the possession of his passenger, the supercargo. You are she."

"What do you want with the chart?"

"Pardon me, Miss Ellen, but that does not especially concern you."

"Courteous!" sneered the girl.

"Oh, well," said Smith equably, "I'm going in with this boat to cut out the *Ellen,* as you have probably guessed, and I want to know the way up the inlet. That's all."

"I suppose it is useless for me to deny that I had such a paper, but I refuse to give it up. It is concealed in this ship. If you find it, you can have it. You shall have no assistance from me in your search."

"I know exactly where it is," said Smith slowly.

"Impossible! You cannot!" cried Miss Ellen.

"It is on your person."

"What!"

"There," he pointed his finger straight at her. "When I was talking about the papers to Captain Evers I saw you make an involuntary movement toward the waist of your dress."

"I wish I had been paralyzed before——"

"It is still there, then?"

"Oh, why did I not destroy it?"

"You see, I was right. Please give me the paper."

"I will never give it up! Never!"

"Miss Ellen, speaking seriously——"

"Haven't you been speaking seriously before? Do you call the brutal insults to which I have been subjected, the ruthless attempt to drag me out of the cabin——"

"Miss Ellen," he protested, "not one of those men would have laid a hand on you. I was just about to recall them when you came forth."

"Oh," cried the girl in shame and dismay, for that there was truth in his quiet assertion she instinctively recognized, "why didn't I wait?"

"Why, indeed? I wouldn't hurt a hair of your head!"

"What a cruel, heartless jest you have played upon me!"

"No jest, I assure you. I had to get you out. That was the only way."

"Now that I am out, your power ceases."

"Listen to me, Miss Ellen."

"Miss Jones, if you please."

"Nonsense! I'll call you 'Ellen, darling,' in another minute if you make further objection. My professional future depends upon my getting that paper. Without it I can do nothing. With it I can capture or destroy that privateer. As you know, I am utterly without influence. I have no powerful friends. I must depend entirely upon myself. With that paper success is certain. Unless, in this enterprise at the beginning of the war, I embrace the opportunity presented, I shall be a failure. Above all other men I have cause to love the United States Government. I was a street waif. What I might

have been had I not been trained and an opportunity given me I sometimes shudder to think upon. I have an opportunity here to do my country a conspicuous, a notable service. To repay in some measure what she has done for me. I love you with my whole heart and soul, I would do anything to spare you, but I must have that paper! And there is something more. I said that in capturing the ship that would not be all. I hoped to capture—to win—you also."

"Never, never!"

"I shall! I am an unknown sea-lieutenant now among many thousands, as undistinguished as my name. I shall make myself something with this opportunity. In spite of your anger, I know—they say a woman always knows when a man loves her; why shouldn't a man know when a woman loves him? —I feel that you do love me. When you have time to think calmly over the situation you will see that I am justified in my demand, and you will love me the more for not giving up to you now."

"What do you mean to do?"

She had grown very pale by this time and her voice was quite low and trembling.

"Don't ask me what I mean to do. Please do not put it that way. Give me the paper."

"I will not! Oh, that I were a man!"

"Miss Ellen, you must!"

"I swear I will not!" whispered the girl desperately.

"Then," said the young officer reluctantly, and he

had now become almost as pale as Miss Ellen herself, "I shall have to take it."

"What!" she said. "You wouldn't dare——"

"To serve my country, to destroy that ship, to win you, I would——" He stopped.

"You are a gentleman," she urged piteously.

"Miss Ellen, please give me that paper," he pleaded.

"No!"

She shrank away from him with her hands clasped upon her breast. Back she went till the bulkhead checked her retreat, and he followed her. He stepped nearer her, hesitated, then stopped.

"There is no other way," he whispered at last, "I must have it."

Perspiration stood upon his forehead. He moistened his lips, moved closer to her, and stretched out his hand.

"Don't!" she said imploringly, terrified, outraged, but resolute.

"If there were any women on the ship beside your servant, I would have them search you. As it is, it is better that I rather than another——"

He was very close now.

"For God's sake!" panted Miss Ellen, looking wildly about her for a way of escape in vain.

"The paper!" said Smith sternly. "I must have that paper!"

His hand touched her. He was in earnest then.

"Wait!" she cried, giving way before his desperate determination.

She shrank away from him with her hands clasped upon her breast. Page 78

She hastily tore open two or three buttons of her waist with trembling fingers, thrust her hand inside, and drew forth the piece of paper, which she crumpled in her clenched fist. She made a quick motion as if to strike him with her hand or throw the paper in his face, but he caught her wrist in his iron grasp, held it firmly, and gently drew out the paper. It was the half chart that he required. She stood before him abashed, shamed, almost beautiful in her indignation. He looked at her with a great sorrow, a great pity, in his glance. He would fain have taken her in his arms to comfort her, but he did not dare. She dropped to her seat, her head fell forward upon her arms on the table. She burst into a perfect passion of tears. He had survived her indignation, he had overcome her obstinacy, he had only been amused at her wrath. Her tears unmanned him.

"Forgive me," he pleaded, kneeling by her side and touching her bowed head tenderly. "Forgive me, I had to do it. Everything depended upon it. For God's sake, don't think so harshly of me."

"Won't you leave me alone now?" she sobbed brokenly, not lifting her head, but resisting him as best she could. "You have had your way."

"Say that you forgive me."

"I have nothing to say."

"At least, you will not hate me. Can't you see that I had to do it?"

"I have nothing to say, only if you have any feeling for me now, if you ever had any, you will leave me alone."

He rose and turned away in obedience to her insistence. It was all he could do. Outside the door Chloe was crouching.

"Go to your mistress," he said, "she is in trouble. Poor child!"

"W'at he do ter yo', Missy Ellen?" asked the faithful maid, seeing her mistress' desolation. "I gwine kill dat man ef he mistreat yo'. W'at he do?"

"Nothing, nothing," said Miss Ellen. "I hate him."

But she said this very brokenly and with quite a different emphasis from that she had put upon the same words a little while before.

CHAPTER VIII

MISS ELLEN IS HAPPY AND ASHAMED

As Smith suspected, the two pieces of the chart put him in possession of sufficient information to enable him to find his way without difficulty up Jones' Inlet—for so the little estuary was named—to the wharf alongside which the *Ellen* lay. The position of the privateer was plainly marked. The inlet was a very crooked one, and a vessel coming in from the sound would not be discovered until she rounded a bend perhaps a quarter of a mile from the wharf at which the privateer lay.

The chart had been prepared by Major Jones himself, apparently, for it was very carefully and accurately made. It appeared that the country about the inlet was heavily wooded. Unless lookouts had been established along the shore the passage of the approaching steamer up the estuary could not be detected until she rounded the bend.

After studying the chart, Smith easily determined on his course of action. He would delay matters so as to arrive at the last turning just at sunset. This would give him time to swing alongside the *Ellen* and carry her by boarding by dark. The ensuing night would favor his chance of escape. There was no indication of a fortification where the *Ellen* lay,

or, in fact, anywhere along the inlet, which was of no great value to the Confederates, since there was no city on it, only a little fishing village of poor whites and a few free negroes at the mouth. Once Smith got the two ships away from the wharf and headed down the inlet he fancied there would be no difficulty in getting them into the sound. The only danger then would be from Confederate gunboats patrolling the sound. He would have to deal with them as best he could.

It would have been easy for him to have armed the *Greyhound* before he started with the guns which she had carried for the *Ellen,* but that would alter her peaceful appearance and might be fatal to his success. It was necessary for him to carry everything by surprise. He had fifty of the best seamen in the United States Navy under him, and two competent midshipmen, to say nothing of old Bob Gantline, who, although he had been ignominiously routed in the cabin, was almost as good as another fifty himself.

It was evening when the *Greyhound* ran through Ocracoke Inlet and anchored under the lee of one of the adjacent islands. If he could get an early start the next morning, he calculated that he could cross the sound and reach Jones' Inlet just about the time he had planned.

When he had finally returned to his cabin after his dramatic interview with the woman he loved, she had retired to her state-room. He had not ventured to disturb her during the day. For all his confident

assurance in her affection, he was in a grave state of indecision as to what course to pursue with regard to her. Certainly it was absolutely necessary for him to have that chart. Whether he would have gone to the length of taking it from her or not was a question which he could not decide. There was no need to decide it, anyway, he thought. She had spared him the final indignity of a search by yielding at the last moment. He had counted upon her doing so, as he had counted upon compelling her to enter the cabin at his summons through fear of the boatswain's mate. Later, in calmer moments, she might see that he had dealt with her gently, after all, and that he had done nothing to forfeit her esteem or affection —if by chance he had won it, as he hoped and believed.

Having made everything snug for the night, which was moonless and dark, and there being little fear of a disturbance, although a most careful watch was kept and everything was ready for instant flight should a Confederate cruiser or gunboat come alongside them to investigate, Captain Smith again ventured to invite Miss Ellen to come on deck. He had no idea as to whether she would comply with his polite invitation or not. The probabilities, he thought, were against it. He was greatly surprised, therefore, when he saw her coming up the companionway to the deck, where he had awaited her. They were alone aft. Mr. Brown, who had the watch, had considerately gone forward, leaving the quarter-deck to the captain. Miss Ellen's first words were not promising.

"You sent for me," she said coldly. "I am here."

"Pardon me, Miss Ellen, I only suggested that it would be pleasant for you, after the heat of the day, to come on deck for a turn or two before retiring. There is a cool breeze blowing and I thought you would enjoy it after your——"

He hesitated.

"Say it, sir! After my confinement!"

"I am sure," continued Captain Smith gently, "that your confinement was no work of mine."

"That's right, Captain Smith. Mock me, now that you have me in your power. You have insulted me so many times to-day that I really have lost all faculty of judgment or resistance."

"Don't say that, Miss Ellen! You are not here by my command."

"I have told you that your wishes were my commands."

"Would that they might always be!" he answered deftly. "Miss Ellen, can't you try to see things from my point of view?"

"I have no wish to see them from any point of view other than my own," returned the girl slowly; "it might, however, be useful to you to try to see your own actions from mine."

"What is your point of view, pray?" asked Mr. Smith with persuasive humility.

"That of a lonely, unprotected girl. A prisoner in the hands of my enemies——"

"I am not your enemy."

"Do not interrupt me, please. A woman whose situation ought to appeal to every man, much more to a man who pretends to love her——"

"I do not pretend to love you."

"I do not see how you could, but be that as it may, instead of respecting me you have grossly insulted me. You ordered me to come into your cabin as if you had been an autocrat——"

"No, only a captain."

"And when I refused—for why should I obey your orders?—you would have had me dragged into your presence by your Yankee hirelings!"

"I told you that was only to—er—influence you."

"You meant to frighten me into obedience like a child, I suppose."

"Why should I wish you to be frightened?"

"I don't know why, but——"

"Indeed, Miss Ellen——"

"It is the truth, anyway. You did frighten me into complying. I yielded to force. After I came into your cabin you offered me a personal indignity——"

Her face flamed with color. Although he could not see it in the dark, he could guess it from the way she turned her head and from the heaving of her bosom.

"You were actually going to search me! An unprotected, helpless woman! It was an outrage! I shall never forgive you, never!"

The recollection of the scene was so poignant that in spite of herself she raised her hand to her eyes

and shut her lips tightly, endeavoring to keep back the tears.

"Would you rather I had detailed someone else to take that paper from you?"

She shook her head, unable to speak.

"Miss Ellen," went on the young man very gravely, "I have explained it all to you. I had to have that paper! There was no other way about it. I knew that you had it."

"Would you have taken it from me if I had not given it up?"

"Don't ask me that question," he answered, trying to spare her. "I hoped to persuade you into giving it up."

She would not be put off, however. Impulsively —as has been seen, she was very quick and impulsive in her disposition and temperament—she turned toward him.

"Tom," she said quickly, forgetting for the moment the estrangement and reverting to the habit of the past, "I used to believe that you were a gentleman, that you would not lie. Tell me. Would you have taken that paper from me?"

"Yes," said the man hoarsely, "I would."

"It's all up with me now," he thought, "this will be the end of me."

The truth, however, was the luckiest thing he could have told her. There was a relief in his assurance which was almost too great for words. Mingled with her indignation was a bitter resentment at the thought that he had tricked her into coming into the

cabin at his summons, and then tricked her into giving up the paper. The feeling that if she had made a more stubborn resistance, he would neither have entered her cabin nor have allowed his men to do so was most galling to her. And the fact that her dispossession of the chart was inevitable greatly comforted and relieved her.

"I suppose," she said, "it wasn't a trick then?"

"It was not."

"Would you have sent those men in there to drag me out? You told me you would not."

"That was true."

"How would you have got me out then?"

"I should have gone in for you myself."

"And you would have dared lay hands on me! On the woman you—love!"

"Listen to me, Ellen. For you, for my country, I would dare even your displeasure, which I trust is only temporary. See how it stands. Your father would have none of me before. Now that the war has started and we are on different sides in this great struggle just beginning, he will be more bitterly opposed to me than ever. This adventure gives me a hold upon him by means of which I hope to win you. If I capture the privateer——"

"Would you give her up to him for me?"

"Miss Ellen," said Mr. Smith quietly, "you have faulted me for my conduct toward you this afternoon with some degree of justice, perhaps. That last remark, however, has struck the balance between us. If you think so meanly of me as to suppose that I

would be false to my duty, sacrifice my country to my own personal affection, great though it is, then, and for the first time since I met you, will I despair of ever winning you for my own. I know you could never love where you did not respect, and you could not respect me if you believed me capable of that. I asked you to come on deck that you might enjoy the evening. I see now that you can enjoy it better alone. I will communicate my intentions with regard to you to-morrow. Good-night."

He bowed gravely, and turning on his heel stepped forward. In two bounds she was by his side.

"You shall not go!" she said passionately. "Why do you always put me in the wrong? I meant nothing. It was just a chance——"

"To say a bitter thing? Well, you said it. Thank you. It's what I might expect from such an affection——"

"Stop!" she cried. "Who said that I had any affection for you?"

"I thought so."

"And you think I could retain it after this morning?"

"I thought so."

"Oh, you are impossible!" cried the girl.

He changed his attack swiftly.

"Have you retained it?"

She parried the question deftly, satisfied with her success in detaining him.

"In what way would your success with the privateer enable you to win—me?" she asked softly.

"I hoped to capture your father with the ship.

I reasoned that so soon as the *Greyhound* was seen coming around the bend he would go aboard the *Ellen* to receive us. With him in my power, I intended to offer him his personal freedom in return for his consent to our marriage."

"Did you think so meanly of my father as to believe that he would be a party to a bargain of that kind?"

"No," answered the young officer quickly, "hear me out. I knew that, being an honorable and brave old soldier, he would refuse that proposition."

"You have not misjudged him."

"But I thought that you might be moved by love to secure his freedom."

"By my own slavery?"

"By marrying me. By letting me love you for the rest of my life. You would be my captain."

"To-day looks like that, doesn't it?"

"You must not judge by to-day. The circumstances were unusual."

"I fancy circumstances are always unusual when a man wishes his own way."

"I do not care anything about having my own way ordinarily—where you are concerned, that is," smiled Mr. Smith. "If I can only have you, you can have your own way."

"And do you propose to carry out this little plan now?" she asked.

"I do."

"And you wish to win me, force my consent, by the threat of a Northern prison for my father?"

"I want to give you an excuse for obeying the

dictates of your heart. Won't you believe me when I solemnly assure you that since I first met you, four years ago, I have loved only you? That I have never had thought for another woman? That your beautiful face"—even the plainest woman likes to be told that she is beautiful—"has been before me always? I love you more than ever."

"More than your country?"

"Certainly," he answered without hesitation.

"Why, then, do you do your duty to my hurt?"

"Miss Ellen, men do not always do the thing they wish to do. They do the thing that honor demands, though oftentimes the heart pulls quite another way. Nothing would give me more pleasure than to be able to turn this ship over to you and to say that I and all in it would do your bidding; that your cause would be my cause, your words my words. To be able to do that, to be yours in deed as I am in heart —nothing would make me happier than that except one thing."

"What is that?" she whispered softly.

"To have you mine."

They were close together now. He stooped a little and caught her hand. Her fingers lingered in his grasp, she did not draw them away. He bent nearer. Her head was averted. He kissed her softly on the cheek. Then she turned her face toward him, striving, but weakly, to draw away her hands.

"This," she said, with a trace of her former manner, "is the last straw." There was a final lingering touch of defiance in her words and attitude.

"You are the captain of this ship," she went on cruelly, "you have the advantage of me. If you choose to kiss your prisoner, why, I cannot help it."

"Ellen, dear," he said, his heart throbbing tempestuously, "I didn't take your hand and touch your cheek as the captain of this ship, but as the man who loves you. Won't you understand?"

"I understand everything," said the girl hurriedly, her voice breaking, "everything, everything, better than myself! I am a fool! You ought to hate me. Good-night."

She turned away from him, resolutely now. He was too wise to detain her, and in a moment she was gone.

"I guess," he said jubilantly to himself, "that I'll get both Ellens before I'm through with this undertaking."

As for Miss Ellen, when she got to her cabin she didn't know whether she hated herself most for what she called her weakness, or loved him more for what she called his strength. He had insulted her grossly in the afternoon, and he had kissed her in the night. Did he think lightly to strike a balance that way? She could neither forgive the one nor forget the other. The touch of his lips had been sweet to her too. She was ashamed, ashamed of her weakness, but she loved him. She wished that she had let him take her in his arms and kiss her again. And yet the shame of it!

Tears were the only things adequate to these problems and conditions.

CHAPTER IX

LOVE-MAKING IN THE MORNING

On that tearful night Miss Ellen thought that she would never get to sleep after the exciting events of the day. Yet so great had been the fatigues and such the comfort and satisfaction she took in the final outcome of the last interview with her lover, in spite of her insistence upon her own weakness, that presently she dropped asleep and slept as soundly as if she had not a care.

Captain Smith was more wakeful. In the first place, his duties brought him on deck from time to time, but his heart was light enough, his conscience clear enough, to permit him finally to enjoy his slumbers. He was not sure of her, but he was encouraged, to put it mildly.

Bright and early the next morning he got the *Greyhound* under way on what was to be the most startling adventure and the most remarkable day of his life. The blockade-runner had scarcely commenced to slip through the smooth water of the sound toward the mouth of the Neuse River when Miss Ellen made her appearance on deck. The first glance of the captain brought a blush to her cheek. She strove bravely to overcome the natural nervousness consequent upon the situation, however, and greeted

him in a way which, while it was dignified and slightly repellent, exhibited none of the animosity of the past few days. It presently developed into a quiet friendliness which seemed to rise from a decision to ignore the past and meet him upon a footing of pleasant comradeship, as if nothing had happened.

This in itself was a great, a remarkable concession. It did not indicate that Miss Ellen had forgotten the events of the day before, but rather pointed to a determination to overlook the things that had aggrieved her. This was a virtual condonation of his offences, if offences there were, and it was very comforting to him. He was wise enough to meet her upon her own ground. He made no reference to their previous conversations or to his intentions with regard to her or the ship—adroit young man!

They talked about the weather, which was sufficiently beautiful in the freshness of the early morning and the brightness of the sunrise to excuse them for not selecting a more personal topic. Yet even the best weather is soon exhausted as a subject of conversation. Seeing that he studiously refrained from discussing the future with as much energy as she avoided dwelling upon the past, with womanly perversity she herself broached the subject.

"Last night——" she began.

"Last night I was in heaven," he interjected skilfully.

"I wasn't," she countered quickly.

"I wish you had been," he said, "for I found

the experience exceedingly pleasant and I think you would have liked it. Perhaps I can communicate some of the happiness of it to you now."

"Not in the daytime," she answered demurely.

"Oh," said the enraptured young captain, making a furtive grasp to catch her hand, "I wish it were night again!"

"If it were, I should not be here."

"Why not?"

"You're too—dangerous in the dark."

"I look better then, don't I?"

"You do," decidedly.

That was what he had expected and it was distinctly true, but he sighed deeply, nevertheless.

"As I was about to say," remarked Miss Ellen, giving him full time to appreciate the point to which her by-play had reduced him, "I should like to know, if I may ask the privilege, the programme for to-day, certainly so far as it concerns me."

"I haven't the least objection in the world to telling you. I intend to make the mouth of the inlet just before sunset. Thereafter to follow its course by the chart in the hope of arriving at the wharf just at twilight. Then I shall board the *Ellen*,"—how his voice lingered on that name, she thought, and never before had it sounded so well in her ears,—"capture her, and take her out to sea."

"What about me?" she asked. "Do I play any part in this entertainment?"

"I'm afraid not," answered Captain Smith. "I have reconsidered my decision of yesterday. I love

you "—Mr. Brown, who had the watch again, had discreetly moved forward out of earshot, as before—"more than ever," he continued ardently, "but you have shown me the error of my ways. I may constrain a lady's presence—you understand?"

"Yes, I understand. Go on."

The pressure of her lips indicated that she did indeed understand thoroughly, and that while she had put it out of her mind it was not yet pleasant to recur to it for any purpose.

"But I shall never constrain your heart," he went on softly. "You might be willing to purchase your father's freedom by giving me yourself, but if you did there would be forever a doubt in my mind as to the genuineness of your affection for me, and while I want you very much, while there is nothing that I would not do to win you, I value you too highly to have you come to me for any other reason than that you love me and——"

"The conceit of that" she laughed, interrupting him, yet there was happiness in her voice, which he noted and took courage.

"Yes, isn't it? I'll admit it. The best man on earth," he went on humbly, "would be no match for you, much less a nameless young fellow like myself."

"Smith," said the young lady reflectively, "is quite as good a name as Jones. I never was particularly fond of my surname."

"Miss Ellen, do you mean——"

"I mean nothing more than I say. I wouldn't run down the Smith family if I were you."

"I wouldn't either, if I were a real Smith, instead of—er—an accidental one."

"Never mind," said the girl softly, for there was an undertone of pathos in his badinage which moved her deeply, "you may so act that the real Smiths, as you call them, will be glad enough to claim relationship without scrutinizing your rights."

"Thank you," said the young captain smiling gratefully. "When you talk to me like that I love you more than ever. I'm sorrier than I was before that I ever brought tears to your pretty eyes."

"Does it not strike you, sir, that you are doing a great deal of love-making and furnishing very little information?" asked Miss Ellen, slightly confused by this open wooing—and in broad daylight too!

"Yes, you're quite right. But don't you think it's been awfully one-sided, anyhow?"

"What has?"

"This love-making."

"Very."

"Couldn't you do a little of it yourself, Miss?"

"We are talking business, I think—at least, I am. You were telling me——"

"That I love you."

"Oh, that's stale news. I've known that for four years."

"What have you thought about it yourself during that time?"

"We're not discussing such matters, I tell you. What are you going to do with me?"

"I know what I should like to do with you."

"Captain Smith, will you be serious and answer me?"

"I suppose I must. I don't intend to have you aboard the *Greyhound* when I make a dash for the other *Ellen*. By examining the chart I learn that there are a number of landing places along the river. Here is one on this point, which is about fifteen miles from your father's plantation. There appears to be a little settlement there. I will land you there with your maid. Then I'll carry out the adventure as best I can."

"What do you propose that I shall do, pray?"

"There will be people there who will attend to you, I'm sure. I'll trust to you not to forget me. When the war is over I'll come back and claim you. That is, if I don't get killed in the meantime."

"Don't say that!" she cried quickly.

"Well, it's quite possible, you know," he went on gloomily, realizing that he would lose nothing by driving this dart home; "like Paul Jones, I intend to go in harm's way. I will make my poor claim on my name worth something if I can."

"It's worth a good deal to me now," said the girl daringly.

"Oh, what does that mean? That's the second time that you've said something like that. It's cruelty if it doesn't mean——"

"It does mean something. It means that while I'll never forgive you for what you did yesterday, yet I'll—wait—until the war is over—for you. So you must not get killed, you see."

"I won't," he answered fervently, "with you in view, I'll——"

"Sail ho!" shouted one of the lookouts forward, the proper point for such an interruption having arrived again. "There's a steamer bearing down on us from the nor-ard, sir."

"Now, we'll have trouble," said the captain to the fair companion blushing at his side. "I have observed that trouble always comes just when you don't want it. Especially in love affairs on ships."

"Have you had experience?" she questioned archly.

"Only this one," then he perforce turned away. "Mr. Brown!" he called.

"Sir!" answered the young midshipman.

"We'll hold on just as we are. If they hail us, I will do the talking."

"What do you intend to do?" asked Miss Ellen.

"I think yonder vessel is a Confederate gunboat patrolling the sound. We have learned that there are a number at Hatteras Inlet. I believe the government intends to—but there, you're on the other side."

"If you are correct," said the girl, "you will be captured."

"No, I think not."

"You will fight?"

"Can't, with no guns mounted."

"I see. But you can run away."

"That would excite suspicion. Perhaps I can delude them. They must know the *Greyhound* is ex-

pected and—but I think I shall have to ask you to go below."

"But I don't wish to," she answered promptly.

"I didn't suppose you would. In fact, I was sure you wouldn't. But, you see, while I'm endeavoring to deceive the captain of that other vessel if it should be a Confederate gunboat, and from the way she's bearing down on us I'm sure of it, it would be very easy for you to betray me by declaring the truth."

"Would you do that were the case reversed?"

"Yes," he answered gravely, "it would be my duty."

"Duty!" she pouted. "I hate that word!"

"So do I, sometimes. Just at present I know one case where a duty would be altogether charming."

"What is that?"

"The duty of marrying you."

"Nonsense!"

"Do you think marrying you would be nonsense? Now, I think that would be a very serious business."

"Captain Smith, will you ever be serious and attend to your own business?"

"Not until you finally reject me."

"I shall do so at once. How do you feel now?"

"I feel as if I didn't believe you. However, this is beside the question. I shall have to beg you to go below."

"And if I refuse?"

"There's the bos'n's mate," with a wave of his hand.

"Odious man!"

"Which man?"

"Both of you."

"There's one thing I'll grant you," he said, laughing at her reply. "If you will give me your word of honor that you will not say a single word or make a single sign which will give them the slightest inkling of the truth, you may stay on deck."

"I promise," she answered thoughtlessly enough.

"You give me your word of honor?"

"Yes."

"I trust that as far as I would that of any man I ever knew."

He spoke heartily, yet there was duplicity in his proposition. He realized that the sight of Ellen Jones, who was probably well known to the officers of the gunboat, standing by his side, would do more to confirm the impression he desired to convey, that the *Greyhound* was still in the possession of her original crew, than any other incident. "Men," we are told by competent authority, "were deceivers ever," and Smith was no exception to the rule.

CHAPTER X

THE "PAMLICO" IS DECEIVED

During this little conversation the Confederate war steamer, converted from one of the sound passenger steamers by mounting a heavy gun on the forecastle, had been rapidly overhauling the *Greyhound,* which, in accordance with her captain's policy, made no effort to escape. The blockade-runner undoubtedly had the heels of the gunboat, but it was not Smith's desire to run away. As he had said, to do that would certainly give the alarm, and as the success of his undertaking depended entirely upon a surprise, it was imperatively necessary for him not to awaken any suspicion as to the changed condition of the *Greyhound.*

Consequently when the gunboat fired a shot across the bows of the blockade-runner Smith promptly stopped his ship. The gunboat rounded to a short distance from the starboard quarter of the *Greyhound* and an officer standing forward of the pilot-house hailed,—

"What ship is that?"

"The blockade-runner *Greyhound* from New Providence," replied Smith calmly. "What ship is that?"

"The Confederate gunboat *Pamlico,* Captain

Coley. We've been expecting you," continued the Confederate. "Have you got the guns for the *Ellen* aboard?"

"I have," answered Smith mendaciously.

They were at present safely stowed below in the hold of the *St. Lawrence*. However, that didn't matter.

"Good!" said Captain Coley, "the privateer is all ready except mounting the guns."

"She still lies at the wharf at Jones' Inlet?"

"Yes, just where she was."

"Good!"

"You seem rather high in the water," continued the Confederate captain.

"My cargo's a light one, medical stores and so on, bulky but doesn't weigh very much," answered Captain Smith readily.

"I see. Is that Miss Jones on board of you?"

"She is," replied Captain Smith, coolly stepping aside so as to bring Miss Ellen into full view.

Now that the two ships had met, Miss Ellen regretted, first, that she had stopped on deck at all, and, second, that she had pledged her word not to betray the state of affairs on the *Greyhound*. She loved her lover, but she also loved her father. While she was not rampant for the South, she nevertheless loved her State. Foreseeing, so soon as the conversation begun, that she would probably be recognized, she had kept behind Captain Smith and so partially out of sight of Captain Coley.

"How unkind of you!" she said reproachfully to

her lover when he stepped aside, bringing her into full view.

"I had to do it, dearest; I am so sorry," he replied softly, and she thrilled at the endearing name and forgave him on the spot. "If I had shown the least hesitation, I might have awakened his suspicion and——"

"Good-morning, Miss Jones," cried Captain Coley, flourishing his hat, "I hope you are well?"

"Quite well, thank you, Captain."

"Did you have a pleasant voyage?"

"Rather exciting toward the last."

"How's that?"

"Well, we were chased by some Yankee cruisers."

"Remember your promise!" said Captain Smith quickly, in a low tone.

"You need not remind me. I always keep my word," she returned.

"I am glad you escaped from them," continued Captain Coley; "your capture would have been a terrible loss indeed."

"Yes, wouldn't it?" said Smith heartily. "It was a near thing, though. If the *Greyhound* had not been a swift goer we would not be here," which was true enough, by the way.

"Well, it's all right so long as you got away," said Captain Coley lightly. "I won't detain you, Captain——"

"Evers. Captain John Evers, at your service," said Mr. Smith promptly.

"His name is George," put in Miss Ellen ma-

liciously, not loud enough for Captain Coley to hear her, of course.

"Miss Jones, pray give my remembrances to your father. Tell him we are eagerly awaiting for the privateer to get to sea. She'll make the Yankees jump, I'll warrant!" continued the Confederate officer.

"I hope so!" said Miss Ellen fervently.

It was the only time she had felt at liberty to express her real opinions freely and without restraint.

"Good-by," said Captain Coley, bowing again. "Go ahead, Captain Evers."

With that the wheel of the gunboat was put up, she swung around under the stern of the *Greyhound* and went off up the sound again. Captain Smith was in no hurry to get away. He waited until the *Pamlico* fairly crossed the stern of his ship, so that her commander could see the words *Greyhound* painted thereon in large letters and thus receive another evidence of identity, if he needed one.

"It was fortunate enough for us," he remarked at last, "that Captain Evers was a stranger to these waters. Otherwise this cruise would have ended right here, I'm afraid."

"How did you know that Captain Evers was a stranger here, sir?" asked Midshipman Brown, who had drawn near.

"From the fact that he had to have a chart to the inlet, for one thing, and because he told me so, for another," answered Captain Smith, laughing.

"As for me," said Miss Ellen, "I feel like a traitor."

"I do not see why you should," said the young captain reassuringly; "it was *force majeure,* you know."

"I don't understand French."

"Neither do I, except a phrase here and there. *Force majeure,* for instance, means pressure by"—his glance swept forward—"Master Gantline, the bo's'n's mate——"

"I understand that," said the girl quickly, as Mr. Brown wisely crossed to the other side of the deck. "And do you mean to apply it to me all my life?"

"Thank you for that question," exclaimed Captain Smith joyously; "no, only until I have won you. Then it will be the other way."

The rest of the day's run was made without molestation. The sound, the waters of which had once teemed with small boats, was largely deserted. Sailormen of that vicinity were all afloat either in blockade-runners or in the Confederate naval squadron, which had its headquarters near the forts at Hatteras Inlet, and the place was as lonely as the ocean. Nor was there anything particular to engage the attention of the captain at present, so that he and Miss Ellen had the happy day to themselves.

Captain Smith could be very nice when he chose, and this time he chose. He laid aside his jesting manner and devoted himself with all his powers to his fair companion. They passed idyllic hours together. The rapidly moving ship, the blue sky, the fresh breeze generated by the speed of the vessel, the assiduous attention of her lover, his deference, his courtesy,

most of all his frank and open admiration, filled the girl's heart with happiness. Although she refused to say so outwardly, she had forgiven him for all he had done. Her heart really exulted at the cool, masterful manner in which he had handled her. Surely, having succeeded so brilliantly in mastering a woman of her temperament, there was nothing to which he would not be equal. She might trust herself to him without hesitation. So she reasoned.

Like every masterful woman,—and those who lived in the slave-holding South tended to become that, and the tendency was accentuated in Ellen's case by the fact that she was the only daughter of a soldier of rank, a widower for many years,—she found a novel experience in being mastered by someone else. The novelty of such things usually wears off quite rapidly, and if the endeavor is maintained for any length of time, a revolt is sure to ensue. In this instance, however, the whole affair was so recent, so new, that in her secret heart she really enjoyed it.

Toward sunset the *Greyhound* crossed the mouth of the Neuse River and ran for the opening of Jones' Inlet, which she reached about half after five in the afternoon. At her lover's suggestion Miss Ellen had gone below to the cabin to prepare for her journey. So soon as the ship stopped he went below to bid her good-by. She was just coming out of her state-room when he entered. Behind her was Chloe. He motioned to the black woman, who feared him like death, to leave the cabin. Ellen made an involuntary effort to detain her maid, but there was no stopping

Chloe with the captain's glance fixed upon her, and Miss Ellen was really glad to see her go.

"Miss Ellen," said Captain Smith gravely, "the boat is ready for you. I shall have to say good-by."

"I don't want to go ashore," she said quietly. "I would rather stay with you on the ship."

"I can't allow that," returned the young captain. "I can't tell what desperate work there may be before us. I can't imperil your life. No, not on any account."

"But I——"

"It is useless to argue, Miss Ellen, darling," he said firmly, and again her heart responded to the caress in his voice and words. "If anything should happen to you on this boat, it would kill me. You must go ashore before the battle begins."

There was a finality in his voice that silenced her.

"I had hoped," he continued, "that in some way I might succeed in winning you in this adventure. I had dreams of forcing your father's consent to our marriage, of bribing you to accept me by—but I have put that away. You know that I love you, that I have always loved you since I first saw you. I can hardly expect to win your father's consent, but you are of age, I believe, and I put my hope in you. If in a fair, square, manly way I can win you, with or without your father's permission, I shall be very happy and grateful. If I cannot,"—he smiled bravely but sadly,—"I shall die a bachelor."

"You needn't do that," said the girl softly.

"You mean——"

"Oh, I don't know what I mean!" she protested as he caught her in his arms.

Indeed, it was not necessary for her to explain. After a faint resistance she suffered him to kiss her upon the lips, and after a little pause she returned his caress. After a long pause, filled in the usual happy way, they found time for articulate speech.

"You are so masterful," she said. "I hardly know why I obey you."

"Don't you love me?"

"I suppose—well—yes, then."

"I shall never constrain you again. I swear it!" said Captain Smith solemnly. "Oh, Miss Ellen, dearest, darling, beautiful Miss Ellen, if I am the flattest failure in this enterprise, I shall have cause to bless it, count it the happiest time of my life, for I have won you for my promised wife—poor, plain, unknown sailor that I am!"

"Hush! You must not say that, I won't have you disparage yourself. You are the noblest, the bravest man I ever saw!" she insisted vehemently.

"But not the handsomest!" he laughed like a boy.

"Well, may be not that, but you are just the kind of man I like to look at," she admitted with a glance of such devotion as set him in the seventh heaven of delight.

"You can give me no greater proof of your overwhelming affection than that," chuckled Smith, shaking his red head joyfully with an air of great satisfaction.

There was a tap at the door.

"Beg pardon, sir," said Mr. Robinson discreetly, "but the tide is drifting the ship toward the shore and——"

"All right," returned Captain Smith, "we'll be on deck in a moment. Is the boat ready?"

"Yes, sir."

Left alone for the last time, Smith took the girl in his arms again.

"Remember your promise not to say a word about my plans until to-morrow morning, when you may tell everybody if you wish."

"I shall remember," said the girl; "it is a safe promise. I could not possibly reach my father's plantation before morning. It's a terrible road. I don't suppose there's a horse in the settlement. You'll be safe from me."

"I know that, of course," said the young officer.

"Now promise me something in return."

"Anything you wish, my darling."

"Please be careful of yourself. Don't get hurt. I couldn't bear it after waiting all these years for you."

"Then you did wait for me! Oh, Miss Ellen, Miss Ellen!"

He strained her to his heart and kissed her in farewell. But the parting had to be a brief one. If his ship should take ground on the shore, that would be the end of his undertaking. He saw her safely aboard the boat, which presently landed her with Chloe in attendance at the little fishing village, consisting of half a dozen hovels on the strand.

Sending Chloe to seek shelter for them for the night, she stood on the beach, her eyes filled with tears, watching the boat return to the ship, watching the figure of her lover alone aft, watching the ship itself gather way, round the bend, and enter the inlet. When should she see him again? How should that plighted word between them be carried out? He had told her—indeed, she knew it—that a great conflict must ensue before the Confederates could be subdued, or, in case of success, gain their independence. It was hardly possible that they could marry until the war was over. She knew his impetuous, daring nature. She felt sure that he would be in the thick of the fighting. He might be killed. He might be killed that night!

CHAPTER XI

MISS ELLEN ARRIVES TOO LATE

Miss Ellen was so thoroughly miserable, so entirely oblivious to her surroundings, that she did not hear a horseman approaching until the horse was almost upon her. The rider stared at her curiously as he drew near, recognized her presently, threw himself instantly from his horse, took off his hat, and bowed low before her.

"Why, Miss Ellen Jones!" he exclaimed, "what are you doing here? Why are you not on the *Greyhound?* I saw her rounding yonder point a few moments ago."

"Captain Haywood," faltered poor Miss Ellen, "I—I——"

She did not know what to say to him. She knew that he was in love with her. The son of a neighboring planter, he had paid court to her before she went to the Bahamas. Although he had received no encouragement from the young woman herself, her father had made no secret of his approval of the young man's suit. So backed, Haywood still entertained hopes that he would ultimately win her.

Haywood had been a naval officer who had resigned his commission and gone South at the outbreak of the war; thereafter he had joined with Major Jones

in equipping the privateer, of which he was to have command.

"We have been looking for the *Greyhound* most eagerly," he continued. "She's two days overdue, according to our calculations. The *Ellen* is all ready but the guns. I've been looking for you as well," he added. "I am surprised to find you here. What does it mean?"

"What are you doing here yourself, Captain Haywood?" asked the girl fencing for time.

"I rode down to the point this afternoon to find out if the ship were in sight. You cannot know how anxious we have been. I was rejoiced beyond measure when I saw her round the bend. I hailed her, hoping to get aboard, but she was going rapidly and they didn't pay any attention to me. They didn't recognize me, probably, as she was some distance from the shore, so I came on here to bait my horse and then ride back to the ship. It's fifteen miles. I ought to reach there in an hour and a half."

"Fifteen miles in an hour and a half! Over such a road?" exclaimed Miss Ellen.

"The government has made a new road along the river bank to be used in transporting supplies and moving troops. It's much shorter than it used to be and in first-rate order. But you haven't told me why you are her."

"I—I——"

Her plighted word rose before her. She could not tell the truth, she would not tell a lie, yet nothing but the truth would serve. There was no reason why

a young woman should land there from a ship which was going directly to her destination and would land her at her own place in two hours. There was no reason why she should be in this wretched place at all.

"I had a—a disagreement with Captain Smith." The fatal word slipped out in spite of herself.

"Smith!" exclaimed the astonished Haywood. "Why, I thought his name was Evers!"

"Yes, yes, I mean Captain Evers."

"But what sort of disagreement could you possibly have which would warrant you in leaving the ship here and at night? I don't understand?"

"Captain Haywood," said the girl desperately, "I do not recognize any right in you to catechize me in this manner. I landed from that ship because I—I wanted to. I am not required to give you any explanation whatsoever of my movements."

Miss Ellen spoke with indignant fervor, but she was not remarkably good at evasion, and Captain Haywood was a very shrewd, intelligent young officer.

His suspicions were immediately aroused by her persistent refusal to account for her presence on the shore. He thought hard as he stood before her. Her whole bearing, he noticed, was that of a person concealing something. The *Greyhound* was very late. He had noticed that she was remarkably light in the water too, almost as if in ballast, whereas she should have been sunk to her loadline with the heavy cargo he knew that she ought to have been carrying.

Miss Ellen, as representing her father, virtually

owned the *Greyhound*. Her will on that ship, save in technical matters, was paramount, but she had been put ashore. She refused to explain her presence. There could have been no misunderstanding between Captain Evers and herself. While the captain was not personally known in the sound, yet his reputation was well established as that of a brave, skilful, courteous sailor. Major Jones had learned this through common friends before he had permitted Captain Evers to be engaged to bring in the *Greyhound*.

The *Petrel* had been gone for a week also. Nothing whatever had been heard from her since her departure. Putting these things together, Captain Haywood stumbled upon the truth of the story. The *Greyhound* had been taken, she had been lightened of her cargo, and was now coming in in order to cut out the privateer he was to command!

"Miss Ellen," he burst out furiously, "I see it all. The *Greyhound* has been captured. Her cargo has been taken out. She is crowded with Yankees and is coming in to cut out my ship. They put you ashore to get you out of the fighting. Is that true?"

Poor Ellen was in a fearful dilemma. She could only stare dumbly at the captain.

"You do not say anything," he said. "I know it is true. What keeps you silent I don't know. You are betraying me——"

"I owe you no allegiance."

"No, but you are betraying your father, and, worse than that, you are betraying your State. For-

"You are betraying me."

Page 114.

tunately, I can thwart them. I'm sorry to call you a traitress. Good-by."

He swung himself into the saddle, struck spurs into his horse, and galloped off.

A traitress! Was it true? Yet if so, how could she help it? She was quick enough to foresee just what would happen. The new and direct road, cutting off the bends and turns of the crooked inlet through which the steamer would necessarily be obliged to proceed slowly and with caution, would enable Haywood to reach the *Ellen* long before the *Greyhound*. He could organize resistance. It was probable that some armed forces would be in the vicinity of Jones' Wharf. Thinking to surprise the privateer, the attacking party would be surprised themselves and captured. There would be a fight, her lover would be in the thick of it, and he would be wounded, perhaps killed. Rather that a thousand privateers should be lost than that should occur! She must get to the *Ellen* herself before the battle. What she could do there she could scarcely tell. But she might do something. At least, she could try to save him.

She turned and ran desperately toward the largest house, which stood well back from the shore in a clump of trees. Everybody in that quarter knew the Jones family, one of considerable importance in that section of the country. All of them knew Miss Ellen. After going from house to house she finally succeeded in getting the loan of a common old farmhorse. He would have to do. Chloe could be left behind till

the morning. She must go on. There was no woman's saddle to be had in the village. She did not hesitate on that account. She took what she could and made the best of it. Throwing her right knee over the saddle horn, she rode until out of observation, and then bestrode the horse manfully, in manly fashion, and proceeded on her way.

The horse was tired from his day's labor and was but a poor, old, lumbering beast at best. Ellen was a consummate horsewoman, and she communicated something of her anxiety and purpose to the animal she rode. In spite of her skill and her efforts, however, her pace was a slow one. About a mile from the wharf the horse gave out completely. She slid from the saddle to the ground, gathered her skirts in her hands, and ran fleetly along the ground at a great rate. She was thankful that she was young, active, and strong. She covered the ground with amazing speed. It was quite dark now. The road ran from the forest through which she had been riding since she left the village along the open shore at a distance of half a mile from the wharf. It left the wood at a hill and abruptly descended to the level of the river; on the other side of the wharf the forest began again and continued up to the great house which sat on a bluff and was embowered in trees.

Just as she got to the open she saw the *Greyhound,* a black mass in the fading light, rounding the bend. The *Ellen* lay quietly at the wharf. The *Greyhound* had been delayed. She had touched the shore once or twice and the navigation had proven more diffi-

cult than Smith had anticipated. The vessel was at least an hour late or Miss Ellen would not have been in time even to see her approach.

Ellen had not overtaken Captain Haywood, of course. His horse was a thoroughbred, and every minute had increased the distance between them. For a moment the girl stared from the hill at the two ships. She knew positively what the conditions were. The men of the *Greyhound,* armed to the teeth, were ready for boarding. She did not doubt but that the decks of the *Ellen* would be covered with men equally well armed and that so soon as the ships touched each other a dreadful battle would ensue and the *Greyhound's* crew would be overwhelmed. She never doubted that Captain Smith would lead his boarders. He would be killed to a moral certainty.

She measured the distance swiftly, and instinctively estimated the rate of speed at which the *Greyhound* was approaching. Try as she might, the ships would be in contact before she could get to them. She might as well, for all she could do, stay on the hill and watch the fighting. But something, her love, perhaps, drove her forward. She might die in the attempt, but at least she could try.

Once more she gathered her skirts in her hands and ran with the fleetness of Camilla, as if she had not taken a step during the day, down the hill and toward the wharf. She strained every nerve. She brought into play every atom of strength in her being to accomplish her hopeless task. Her heart beat terribly. Her mouth was parched and dry, her breath

came shortly, she panted like a driven hare. Something rose in her throat and choked her. She had not run wisely under the stimulus of her terror and her desire. She had not saved herself for the end. She had spent herself at the first dash. Presently she found herself reeling. Only her indomitable will kept her up. She would have fainted had she stopped.

She struggled along the road, desperate, blinded. She was within one hundred yards of the wharf now. The *Greyhound* was slowly swung alongside the *Ellen*. She heard voices. The drumming in her ears prevented her from distinguishing what they said. She tried to call out a word of warning. Her husky voice died away in her throat. A cheer broke on the night. It was followed by a yell. There was a shot, two shots, a crashing volley, the ring of steel on steel, oaths, cries, shrieks, groans, words of command.

She was at the gang-plank now. It seemed as if she could not take another step, yet she ran up it and boarded the ship. Nobody marked her in the darkness and confusion. The deck, which had been filled with writhing, struggling figures, suddenly grew quieter. The shots died away. The curses and yells stopped. The clang of steel blades was heard no more. But the groans and curses were louder than ever. She leaned against the gangway gasping for breath, striving to recover herself—praying, fearful, broken.

"It's all over," she heard a voice say. "We've got 'em. Their leader is here."

It was Captain Haywood who spoke.

"Show a light here, someone," cried another voice, her father's. "Bring him into the cabin," continued Major Jones.

"Ay, ay, sir," answered Haywood. "Mr. Matthews, look out for the prisoners and send men to secure the other ship. You have done splendidly," continued the captain to his crew. "Let all hands splice the main brace handsomely."

Amid the cheers of the victorious Confederates her father and Captain Haywood, followed by two men, half dragging, half carrying, a limp, inanimate figure between them, entered the cabin beneath the poop —the *Ellen* being provided with a raised poop. The light carried by the third man fell full on the face of the prisoner as they hauled him through the door. She had strained her eyes after the group, unable to move until that moment, when in that flash of light she recognized her lover. His face was white as death. There was a red gash across his forehead.

She had been incapable of motion before. No one had yet noticed her in the gangway in the excitement. She ran—where she got the strength she never knew —across the deck, brushed past two or three groups of astonished men, and burst into the cabin after the others.

Her father sat at the head of the table, Captain Haywood stood at one side. One of the seamen was kneeling by the door, supporting the prostrate officer. He had evidently been wetting the face of Captain Smith, who had just at that moment recovered con-

sciousness. He struggled to a sitting position by the aid of his hands. The girl stopped in the doorway motionless. Not a vestige of color was in her cheeks or lips. Her skirts were muddy and bedraggled. Her hat was gone. Her hair hung about her face in wild dishevelment. Only the rapid motion of her bosom betokened life. Haywood and her father stared at her, speechless.

"You!" whispered Captain Smith, struggling to his feet. The seaman assisting him, he rose unsteadily.

"You!" he said reproachfully. He brushed the blood out of his eyes as he did so and thrust out a trembling hand toward her. Some drops of blood were flicked upon her dress by his gesture.

"You broke your word!" he said; "the blood of my men is upon you!"

This was too much for the girl. She put out her hand as if to ward off a blow, her other hand grasped at her bosom. A little moan came from her parched lips. She collapsed slowly in a dead faint, a limp heap in Captain Haywood's arms. They had all been too astonished by her entrance to say a word in the brief time in which the scene had taken place.

CHAPTER XII

MISS ELLEN IS AGAIN DISOWNED

As his daughter fainted, Major Jones, who had been staring open-mouthed and aghast from her to his prisoner, leaped to his feet, ran to Captain Haywood, and took the girl from his arms. Assisted by one of the seamen, he carried her into the nearest state-room of the ship, leaving with Haywood the prisoner, who had sunk down on a transom, for he was as yet scarcely able to command himself.

Captain Smith's life had been preserved in a miraculous manner. Leaping over the rail of the *Ellen* at the head of his men, it should have been impossible for him to have escaped. Haywood's pistol had sent a bullet across his right temple, making a nasty looking cut and knocking him senseless, but doing no permanent harm. As he fell, one of the soldiers on the *Ellen* had hit him on the head with the barrel of his gun. The blow had been a glancing one, otherwise his skull would have been fractured. Its effect, however, was to increase his stupor. He was faint and sick from loss of blood and from shock, but the physical pain he felt was as nothing to the anguish in his soul at the thought that the woman he loved and had trusted had betrayed him.

The sense of failure, the consciousness of defeat,

the pain of wounds, the loss of his men—everything —was swept away in the bitterness of betrayed trust. With the shattering of his faith in Miss Ellen went his confidence in mankind, for to him she stood for all that was noble and true. If she were false, then there was no honesty or virtue extant. That was the overwhelming thought at the moment. Presently there would come other thoughts. The brave men who had been shot down under his leadership, the total failure of his enterprise, the ruin of his present prospects! He had tried to do something and had failed. He had loved and he had lost. He had trusted and he had been betrayed. The situation was unbearable.

He knew that he could never explain it to the satisfaction of his superiors. He realized that his professional future was ruined. Probably he would be cashiered. He could not think how she had reached there with the news, but it was evident that she had. His thoughts were broken in upon by Haywood.

There was something between the prisoner and the woman Haywood loved. Of that the Confederate captain was quite convinced. During his mad gallop from the mouth of the inlet to the wharf he had racked his brains to solve the problem of Ellen's silence. He was sure the *Greyhound* had been captured. If so, there would be a Federal officer on board her. He remembered having heard that a Federal officer had been madly in love with her some years since. As he had made no progress in his own suit, he naturally jumped to the conclusion that the

reason for his non-success lay in her attachment to this officer. What was more natural than that he should be in command of the *Greyhound* and that she should be keeping silent for love?

Haywood's jealousy made him wrong the girl he loved. Whatever her feelings might have been toward Smith, she would certainly have felt it her duty to have apprised her father of the attempt on the privateer, and she would have done it if her honor had not been pledged. She had given that pledge freely enough. For one reason, because she had not the remotest idea that there was any possibility of getting to the wharf the night she landed. Her pledge was only for that night. She knew nothing about the new road.

Haywood's suspicions were confirmed by the dramatic scene between the two which he had just witnessed in the *Ellen's* cabin. Her refusal to tell him anything, the desperate energy with which she had followed him, he knew not how, but to the fact that she had exerted herself to the limit of her strength her appearance bore her ample testimony; the pallor and anxiety of her face, her cry when she saw Captain Smith was a prisoner and wounded, his terrible accusation of her, and her reception of the charge, made it all as clear as day.

Having attended to some necessary duties and given some required orders, Captain Haywood turned to interrogate his prisoner. Smith still remained on the transom. The doctor had been summoned, but he had been busy, first of all, in the inner cabin with

Miss Ellen. Thereafter he had superficially examined the prisoner and had pronounced his wounds not serious. Barring a bad headache, Smith would soon be all right.

"Are you able, sir," asked Captain Haywood courteously, in spite of his jealous anger, "to answer my questions now, or would you prefer to be interrogated to-morrow?"

"Now," answered Captain Smith, whose head had been bound up and who had been strengthened by a liberal glass of whiskey and water.

"What is your name, sir?"

"Smith."

"Is that your real name, or do you simply desire to conceal your identity——"

"That is my name, sir. All that I have."

"I take it that you are an officer of the Federal Navy?"

"I am Lieutenant Smith, of the *St. Lawrence,* Commodore Paulding."

"Are you T. Beekman Smith?"

"I am."

"I heard of you at the Academy. I was of the Class of '55. I'm glad to meet you, Captain Smith."

"But you haven't told me your name."

"Haywood."

"I am glad to meet you, Captain Haywood, although the circumstances are not what I would wish."

"I fear, sir, that they are much more serious than you imagine."

"If you knew how serious they were, you would not say that."

"What do you mean?"

"Nothing. Proceed with your examination, I beg."

"Captain Smith," began Captain Haywood impressively, "I take it that you captured the *Greyhound* off Ocracoke Inlet."

"Your judgment does you credit, sir."

"And that you came in here for the purpose of cutting out the *Ellen*."

"That also is obvious, I should say," said Smith, striving to appear cool and indifferent in spite of his splitting head.

"I should like to know what there is between you and Miss Jones?" asked Haywood suddenly, thinking, perhaps, to take the other off his guard.

"There is nothing between us now," answered Smith firmly.

"But what was there between you?"

"That is a matter, sir, which cannot possibly concern you. Any answer tending to explain my presence here I shall be glad to give, provided it involves no dereliction of duty. Otherwise I have nothing to say."

"It does concern me. I desire to marry that young lady. I intend to do so."

"You have my permission, I am sure, and I wish you joy of your bride," said Smith bitterly.

"Ay," persisted the Confederate, his anger growing, "but I want to know, it is my right as her future husband to know, what sort of understanding there was between you. You said that she had betrayed you."

"You may find out everything from the young lady herself."

"Captain Smith," said the other man severely, "do you fully realize your status?"

"I am a prisoner of war."

"Not exactly."

"Why not?"

"Look at your sleeve."

"There is blood upon it," said the other, lifting it up. "What of that?"

"It isn't the blood I refer to, but the insignia of rank. You wear the uniform of a Confederate naval officer. You have made use of it in entering our lines. I learn from one of the prisoners that one of our gunboats, the *Pamlico,* spoke you this morning and that you passed yourself off as a Confederate officer. You are liable to death as a spy."

"Great God!" exclaimed Smith.

The whole indictment was true. He had not changed his uniform since he boarded the *Greyhound* from the *Upshur.* He had not given the matter a thought. It was true that he had gone within the Confederate lines and had obtained information on the strength of his uniform. Although really his position was that of any other sailor or soldier who attacks the enemy openly, yet technically Captain Haywood had defined it in accurate terms.

"You cannot possibly think me a spy or that I intended to take advantage of you in this uniform?" said Smith as soon as he could collect himself.

"There are the facts," said Haywood. "I will

be quite frank with you. It rests with me whether or not you are treated as a spy or as a prisoner of war."

"Sir," said Smith, rising to his feet, "you may treat me as you please. I fancy my government will have something to say about any extreme proceedings. Further than this I shall not answer you another question."

"Excuse me, Captain Haywood," said Major Jones, coming in from the inner cabin, "I overheard your conversation. It is impossible not to hear everything that goes on within these confined limits. It does not rest with you alone as to how the prisoner shall be treated. I think I have something to say about that."

"And you decide?" asked Smith dauntlessly.

"To hold you a close prisoner as a spy. The rest of your men shall be treated as prisoners of war."

Some of them also wore Confederate uniforms, but it was evident that Major Jones was actuated by a personal animus toward the young Federal officer.

"This is preposterous!" exclaimed Smith hotly. "I demand to be put in communication with the United States authorities at once!"

"We have nothing to do with the United States Government," retorted the major indifferently.

"Well, then, I request to see the military commander of this district—the admiral, or commodore, of this station."

"As to that, later," said Major Jones shortly. "Captain Haywood, you can take him below. I

should put him in double irons, he's a dangerous prisoner."

"I don't believe we want him on the ship, major," said the abashed Haywood. "With your permission I'll take him up to your house and put him in the strong room. Let some of the soldiers guard him."

"Very well," assented Major Jones, while Haywood and Smith left the cabin.

"Father," said a weak voice as Miss Ellen came forth from the cabin, "I heard something of what you said last. Where is Captain Smith?"

Miss Ellen had been revived with great difficulty. The strain upon her had been terrific, and she had almost broken completely. The care of some of the house servants, with the ministrations of the doctor, and such stimulants as had been given her, had brought her to her feet again. She had lain in a maze, but the stern voice of her father, the protests of her lover, had recalled her to her senses once more. Just as Haywood and Smith left the cabin she staggered into it.

"What does it mean?" she asked her father again.

"It means that somebody betrayed our plans to the Yankees," answered her father sternly; "it means that by the capture of the *Greyhound,* the taking out of her everything of value including her guns, they came within an ace of capturing the *Ellen.* It means almost financial ruin to me."

"Yes, yes, I know all that," said Ellen impatiently, as if these things were of little moment, "but what does it mean to Mr. Smith? I heard you say——"

"You heard me say that he was a spy."

"A spy!"

"Yes. Caught inside our lines in our uniform. Taking advantage of it to attack us."

"But what does that mean for him?"

"Death!"

"Oh, my God, not that!"

"Just that. Now I wish to question you. There is only one person from whom the Yankees could have obtained the information which enabled them to find this wharf. That person is——"

"Father! You do not suspect me?"

"I do. I more than suspect."

"But I——"

"I'll do the questioning. You confine yourself to answering. There was some foolish love affair between you and this Yankee hound some three years ago. I infer from what he said that there had been some sort of arrangement between you recently."

"What did he say?"

"You heard him."

"No."

"He said that you had betrayed him."

"I did not!" cried the girl; "it is not true."

"Exactly true. If you did not betray him, you did betray me. Haywood says he met you on the strand at the fishing village; that you refused to tell him a thing. He was quick-witted enough to divine that something was wrong. He galloped here. By good fortune two battalions of infantry had marched here from the camp for practice. They volunteered

their services. We lined the decks of the *Ellen* with them and when the Yankees came we were ready for them. If it hadn't been for that, this ship would have been lost. You knew our peril, yet you remained silent."

The major spoke coldly, but he was furiously angry. Not only was he angry, but he was bitterly grieved as well at the apparent defection of his daughter.

"I promised him, father," she began.

"Bah! What's a promise to an enemy! Besides, he must have had the chart of which you had a piece."

"I had to give it up. I——"

"Make no explanations; I do not care to listen to them after that confession. I never was so wounded in all my life. And by my own daughter! The loss of the *Greyhound's* cargo is a fearful thing for me to sustain. The loss of the *Ellen* would have brought me to beggary, forced me into the army again, by gad, at my time of life! Fortunately, this plan miscarried. I hold that my loss was all due to you. I shall provide for you in some way, but I never wish to see you again. Do not seek to justify your course."

"But I love him, father; I have been honorable."

"That will do. I shall have one of the men escort you to the house. Mr. Haywood is as disgusted with your treachery as I am. I had hoped to arrange a marriage between you, but that's all over now. You have chosen to interfere in my plans. I shall see that you have no opportunity to do so again. My property I shall dispose of elsewhere. I shall leave you barely enough for your support."

"Don't say that, father! Do not treat me in this way. Let me explain."

"There has been enough explanation," cried the old man harshly and bitterly; "you can go to your lover, or you could have gone to him were he not to hang as a spy at my pleasure."

"Very well, sir," said the girl, compressing her lips and striving to keep back the tears called forth by her indignant, passionate father's injustice. "You have condemned me without a hearing. You have drawn inferences from my unfortunate position which are not warranted, as he has done. You have turned away from me. You have put me out of your affections. I will go. I can make my own way. I do not wish your money."

She was as proud, as high-spirited, as Major Jones himself. She turned instantly and left him. Although she felt very miserable, she determined that she would carry out what was before her without hesitation. She gained the deck of the ship, crossed it, descended the gang-plank to the wharf, and started up the hill, at the top of which stood her father's house. On the way she met Captain Haywood returning after having delivered his prisoner. He stopped and strove to speak to her. She repulsed him with disdain.

"I know," she said, "what you and my father are trying to do without a shadow of justification. You are going to hang Captain Smith as a spy. If you think to win my favor by such an action, you are sadly mistaken."

"What is he to you?" asked Haywood jealously.

"He is my affianced husband, or was until——"

"I heard him myself renounce all pretensions to your hand."

"That is because he thinks I betrayed him. One word from you would have told him the truth. You kept silent. Was that the act of a gentleman?"

"I match my case against yours any time."

"Noble retort!" she replied scornfully, drawing herself up.

"Noble or not," said Haywood, "I don't care to bandy words with a—traitress."

"If I were a man," said the girl hotly, "you would never have dared to say that."

"If you were a man," said Haywood with equal heat, "you would have been dead by this time, for I would have killed you."

Miss Ellen turned from him without another word and walked up to the house. She could not trust herself to speak further with him or anyone.

CHAPTER XIII

MISS ELLEN PROVIDES A WAY TO FREEDOM

The girl had many things to do, but in spite of all her resolution she was utterly unable to accomplish them then. Her old black mammy was just in time to catch her young mistress in her stout arms as Miss Ellen staggered across the threshold, and it was upon that broad old bosom, upon which she had reposed as a child, that she finally sank to sleep after the terrible events of the night.

Her father remained on the ship the next day. He refused to see her. He sent word that, failing the guns which he was to receive from the *Greyhound,* he had bought two old field pieces from the Confederate Government which would be delivered in a few days, and that so soon as he could get the *Ellen* armed she would set sail on a cruise. That would probably be during the next week. He said that the *Greyhound* would go to Charleston with the *Ellen* in search of a cargo and that his daughter should be left in Charleston with a distant relative of her mother. This relative would be instructed to look after her, a certain sum would be paid yearly for her maintenance, and that being done he washed his hands further of her.

A hard man and a stern was Major Jones. He

was so full of rage at the loss of the *Greyhound's* cargo and the peril to which the *Ellen* had been subjected, due, as he persisted in believing, to his daughter's love for the young Federal officer, whom he detested more than ever, that he was absolutely blind to the bitter injustice of his course. He had sent word to the military commander of the district of the attempt to cut out the privateer, and had described the status of the Federal officer whom he held prisoner.

Miss Ellen learned by inquiry that a court had been convened to try Captain Smith that afternoon. The court was composed of her father, Haywood, one of the infantry captains, and two other officers from the privateer. There was no doubt that they would find him guilty, and in that case he would be hanged. There was no way for her to see the prisoner. He was kept in the strong room with which plantation houses in that section were always provided. The windows of the room were barred and the room itself was carefully guarded by a soldier. The guards were changed every two hours. Ellen racked her brains for an opportunity to get access to the captor. She could think of no way at first.

Late in the afternoon she noticed that the sentry who approached to relieve the one whose tour of duty was just ended was one of her father's tenants, a man who had always professed deep attachment to her since she was a little girl. Often during her childhood she had spent long periods on the plantation with her uncle. This man and she were especially

friendly. She thought she might accomplish her end through him. Fortunately, or unfortunately, as it turned out, just as she had conceived a practicable plan to approach the sentry a squad of soldiers entered, and Captain Smith was summoned before the court, which was to hold its session on the *Ellen*.

The sentry on duty before the strong room was left where he had been stationed. All that Miss Ellen now wished was to get access to the room. She turned from the gallery whence she had seen the little group depart with her lover, passed through her rooms, after some rapid preparation, went out into the hall, descended the stairs, and ran down the long corridor, at the end of which was the door of the strong room.

"Jim," she said to the sentry.

"Lordy, Miss Ellen!" exclaimed the man, who had heard nothing of her arrival and had not seen her approach, "yo' look like a ghost! What's the matter with yo'?"

"Jim," she began, "that officer in there——"

"Yes, Miss Ellen."

"Well, I—he—I—we are——"

"I understand, Miss Ellen, Lord love yo'."

"They're trying him as a spy."

"Yes, I reckon they air," assented Jim gravely.

"He is no spy."

"They're sartin to find him guilty, howsomever," asserted the man seriously.

"It may be," answered the girl, "for they are not just men."

"Your paw is on that air cote a-tryin' him, Miss Ellen."

"I have no father, Jim. My father thinks I am a traitor and that I have betrayed him to this officer. I swear on my honor——"

"I believe yo', Miss Ellen. I've knowed yo' sence yo' was a chile. I reckon yo' wouldn't tell no lie. If there's anything I kin do to help yo', count on me."

"There's nothing you can do," said the girl quickly. She did not hesitate to deceive the man in view of her lover's peril. She would shrink from nothing to save him. "I wouldn't have you false to your duty as a soldier by asking you to let him out. I only ask you to let me in. I want to see him a little while, and then I'll come out."

"Oh, Miss Ellen, I couldn't do that! I'd love to obleege yo'——"

"Well, let me in the room now while he isn't here. I want to write to him. I'll go back and get a paper."

"There's paper in yere," said the man; "the prisoner axed fer some an' he got some this mornin', so I was tole. He's been doin' a powerful lot of writin' this mornin'." The soldier unlocked the door and looked in. "I didn't git no orders not to let nobody go in yere. They tole me to watch an' see that the man didn't git out. I'll let yo' in, but you'll hev to be out afore he gits back."

"All right," said Miss Ellen gratefully, stepping within the room.

There was nothing in the apartment but a cot, a table, and a chair. On the table were writing materials.

"I'll shet the do' an' lock it," said Jim, "an' when I sees 'em a-comin' I'll call for yo'." There was a window in the corridor and he could see the wharf from it. "Miss Ellen, I wouldn't do this fer anyone but yo'," he continued; "p'raps I oughtn't to do it fer yo'."

"God bless you, Jim," said the girl, "I'll never forget you."

When the door was closed she stepped to the table. There were three sealed letters upon it. One was directed to Commodore Paulding, another to a lawyer in New York, who had charge of Smith's small savings, and the third envelope bore her own name. She instantly tore it open. She read:

"Ellen:—I'm to be tried before a packed court, determined on my death, this afternoon. They will hang me, I am certain. I don't believe that you anticipated this when you betrayed me. I have no reproaches for you. I suppose I wasn't worth keeping faith with. You have destroyed my faith in you; you have done more, you have destroyed my faith in woman—almost in God. I don't care what they do to me now. I hate myself for it, yet if it is any satisfaction to you to know it, I tell you that I love you in spite of everything. I love you and shall love you in life and death as well. Don't blame yourself. I forgive you."

That was all. Smith was not a man to indulge in heroics; it was enough. The girl kissed the paper and thrust it into her bosom.

"They shall not kill him!" she murmured. "If my plan doesn't serve, I'll ride to General Bell, the commander of the district, and tell him the truth. He shall stop it. It would be murder."

She realized that she had no time to lose. Proceedings of courts like that upon Smith were always short and summary. Seizing a pen, she wrote:

"I am not guilty of the charge you place against me. I did not betray you. Captain Haywood met me in the village, and my refusal to explain my presence there aroused his suspicion. He saw the *Greyhound* and noticed how light she was in the water. He left me and galloped ahead to the *Ellen* to save her. I got a horse and did my best to follow. When the horse gave out I ran on foot, but arrived too late. They shall not hang you! *Think of me when you lie down. You will need all your strength. Go to sleep early.* If the worst comes, I shall appeal personally to the general commanding the district. Believe that I love you. My father thinks I have betrayed him. He has disowned me. I am yours more than ever and will go to you when you claim me."

Miss Ellen had prepared for her visit. After finishing her letter she ran to the window and examined it. The bars were set in mortar, but the mortar was old. A man, especially one weakened by a wound like that of Smith, could scarcely drag them from their fastenings, but with the aid of an implement it would be an easy matter. She had brought that implement with her. Under her clothing, tied around her waist, she had secured a short iron bar which she had stolen from the gun-room, which, together with a loaded revolver, she slipped beneath the blanket that covered his cot. She might have been more explicit in her directions in the letter, but she trusted that his mother wit would tell him what to do, and if the letter fell into some other hands than his it would reveal nothing and he still might find the weapons. As soon as he lay down on the cot he

would know. She kissed the pillow on which his head had rested, and then, with a long look around the room, she tapped on the door.

"I was gittin' moughty anxious like, Miss Ellen," said Jim, opening the door.

"Here is a letter," said Ellen. "I want you to read it so that you may know there is nothing wrong about it."

"Oh Lordy, Miss, I don't want to read yo' letter!"

"But you must!" said the girl, rapidly reading the brief sentences to him.

"There," she said, "I'll trust you still further. Instead of leaving it on the table, I want you to give it to him. Don't forget it. If they have condemned him to death, a letter like this will help him."

"'Pears like a letter like that'n 'u'd make most men willin' to die," said Jim.

"Jim, I'll never forget you!" said Miss Ellen gratefully, watching the soldier slip the letter in his tunic.

"I wisht I could do mo', Miss, than jest givin' a letter."

Ellen was about to say "That's enough," but checked herself in time.

"That's a great deal," she said, "and I appreciate it."

She took his hard, rough hand in both her own, and before he knew what she was about raised it to her lips.

"Good-by. God bless you, Jim," she murmured, and was gone.

"Well, I'll be dod-gasted!" said Jim, looking at his rough, grimy, soiled hand, "to think that Miss Ellen's lips teched that air ole paw of mine."

He lifted the hairy member, and just where her lips had pressed it he kissed it himself.

In a short time the prisoner was brought forth. The court-martial, in spite of his impassioned defence, had declared him guilty by a vote of four to one. It had appointed daybreak on the following morning for his execution. He had made a formal and indignant protest against the injustice of the sentence and had repeated his request for counsel, for a delay in the execution until he could communicate with Commodore Paulding, or at least until he could plead his case before the district commander. When these pleas had been denied him he had refused to say another word.

This was the end of all his dreams and hopes, but he was determined that no one should see him blench or quiver. He walked across the wharf and up the hill with as erect a bearing and as steady a step as if he were pacing the weather side of a quarter-deck. Through the latticed window Ellen watched him with love and pride. She would fain have discovered herself to him, but she thought it best not to do so, as it might attract attention to her and so interfere with her plan.

So soon as the escort had delivered him to the sentry he was again locked in the strong room. When the soldiers had departed old Jim unlocked the door and entered the room. The prisoner was off his

guard, thinking himself private. He stood leaning against the casing looking out of the window. He could see a stretch of the blue water of the inlet. There lay the *Ellen* where he had failed. Beyond her, swinging at her anchor, was the *Greyhound,* upon which he had set forth with such hopes of success, where he had been so happy. Well, it was all over now. They would hang him in the morning. He had protested against it because it was his duty and because he would fain have lived to serve his country. But his heart was dead within his breast. Miss Ellen had killed hope, trust, everything!

"Stranger," whispered Jim softly, "I hev somethin' fer yo'."

"For me?" asked Smith.

"A letter," said the soldier, fumbling at the breast of his coat, "writ by the young missy."

"For God's sake give it to me!" cried the prisoner.

He tore it open feverishly. He glanced at the contents, and a look of joy came over his countenance.

"Thank God, thank God!" he murmured, "that she was true!"

"If you'd a-knowed her as long as I hev," said Jim severely, "you'd a-knowed there wasn't a better woman under heaven than little missy."

"I believe you. I wronged her. Could you bring her here for a minute?"

"It would be as much as my life's wuth," said Jim, shaking his head sadly. "I done more than I'd ought to, anyway, but I was sorry for the girl. I let her in——"

"Was she in here?" interrupted Smith.

"Yes, while yo' was bein' tried. She set in that cheer an' writ the letter at the table."

"My friend," said Smith, "I have no money. I wouldn't insult you by offering you any if I had, but I wish to give you my watch. I want you to take it from me as a mark of my gratitude. No, don't refuse. Time is of no value to me now. I die in the morning. Keep it, and thank you again and again."

"Thankee, sir," said the old man, taking the watch, a handsome gold timepiece. "I don't need nothin' fer——"

"But I want you to have this. I don't know where it could be more worthily bestowed. You did it for her. Good-by."

He deftly ushered the soldier to the door. He wanted to be alone. The reference to the cot was plain to him. The girl he loved was not false, she had been in that room. The keys to freedom lay there. He first went to the table where she had leaned her arm and kissed the place where she had written the letter. Then and not until then did he go to the cot. A loaded revolver! He was armed for defence. An iron bar! He could wrench off the bars of the window! Here was a way to freedom!

CHAPTER XIV

THE ESCAPE OF THE CAPTAIN

THERE was nothing, of course, that Smith could do toward getting away until the darkness came and until the people in the great house and the outbuildings went to sleep. He had plenty of food for reflection, divided between the testimony to her affection which Ellen's visit had afforded and his plans of action when he escaped from his prison. He stood by the window absorbed in thought, staring listlessly across the yard at the inlet beyond, thinking of her and of the future. Owing to his preoccupation, therefore, it was not for some time that he noticed an unusual commotion about the wharf at which the *Ellen* lay and on the hill beyond in the camp of the soldiers, who had been retained at the plantation after his attack to insure order until matters quieted down —and his execution took place, he thought bitterly. Well, if he could help it, or Miss Ellen could, that would be never.

For the first time he was aware of a third steamer off the plantation. He easily recognized his friend of the day before, the *Pamlico,* which was anchored between the *Ellen* at the wharf and the *Greyhound,* moored further out. It was evident that important tidings and orders of some sort had been brought by

the visitor to the force at the plantation. He learned afterward that the Confederates, fearing an immediate descent upon Hatteras Inlet by the Federals, were assembling every available means for resistance, and the *Pamlico* had been sent to bring to the forts and the undermanned gunboats the troops at the wharf and, if possible, some of the *Ellen's* crew.

Keenly alive now to what was going on, for these departures materially affected his future plans, Smith let nothing of the movements of his enemies escape him. He saw the battalion of infantry strike its tents and go on board the *Pamlico,* using the boats of the *Ellen* and the *Greyhound* for the purpose. More than that, he observed that a large number of the crew of the *Ellen* did not return to the privateer, and he divined that as the Confederates believed there was nothing to fear from the *Greyhound* or the Union force, now that his attempt had failed, and that as the *Ellen* could not be made ready for sea until she could get her guns, they had volunteered temporarily for the Confederate naval force gathering for the defence of the inlet.

He reasoned naturally and clearly that the *Ellen* would be left with a very short crew. He knew that the survivors of his own detachment were confined aboard her, but a few well-armed, resolute men could look after them, especially as they were probably kept locked under hatches in the forehold. All this fitted in beautifully with a plan which he intended to follow so soon as he made his escape. He sat down after his supper, of which he ate every scrap, know-

ing that he would need all his strength, and carefully thought over the various possibilities of the situation. That he could get out of the strong room was certain. What his course must be after that was also certain. He had come to capture or destroy that privateer, and he intended to do the one or the other. He was under sentence of death anyway, and he had little to risk and everything to gain by the endeavor. It was hardly possible for him to escape from the State, and although life was precious—more precious than ever since his reassurance as to Miss Ellen's fidelity; the knowledge of her love was like new wine to him—he determined to risk it in a desperate attempt to capture or destroy the vessels. Intoxicated, elated, he was in an Homeric mood. He felt in himself the possibilities of great things, and he resolved to do them!

Nor was the attempt to destroy the privateer and also the *Greyhound* so hopeless as might at first be imagined. If by any means he could bring release to the prisoners on the *Ellen* he felt sure that he could overpower the depleted crew, and if he could not take her out, he could at least set her on fire and destroy her and then attend to the *Greyhound*. If either of the boats had steam up he might even get away; perhaps he could anyway. He had been lucky in love and was in the mood to believe, in spite of the proverb, that he might be fortunate in war as well; with assurance of Miss Ellen's faith in his heart his mind was in a hopeful and receptive mood.

At ten o'clock the guard was changed. When the relieving guard entered the room to see that Smith

was still there he found his prisoner in bed, covered up, and apparently sound asleep. Smith noticed with pleasure and satisfaction that this guard was one of the sailors of the *Ellen*—at least, he was not a soldier. Evidently they had all gone. Feeling safe from interruption for at least two hours, the young captain crept out of bed and began to work immediately the man closed the door. In half an hour he had pried out two great bars from their worn cement sockets. He could get through the opening by a little squeezing. There was a ten-foot drop to the ground, which was covered with grass. He scraped through the aperture and dropped to the sod without a sound. Drawing and cocking his revolver, he shifted it to his left hand and, carrying his iron bar in his right, he walked cautiously toward the corner of the house. Suddenly a figure started up from the clump of bushes beneath the side of the long gallery. Smith raised his bar, when a frightened voice he recognized whispered:

"Fo' Gawd's sake, Mass' Cap'n, doan hit me! I's Chloe, suh."

"What do you want?" asked Smith softly, lowering the bar.

"Missy Ell'n done axed me to tole yo' dah's a hoss fo' yo' in de trees by de ribbah road. Hit's her own hoss. She done saddle him herse'f so's yo' kin tek him an' git fo' freedom."

"Where is your mistress?"

"I leab her in her room 'bout two hours ago. She's 'fraid dey'll 'spicion her er somefin' ef she goes out, suh."

Smith hesitated. He would give a good deal to see Ellen. It might be managed, but his duty was paramount. He could not permit himself that happiness now.

"Thank her," he said quickly. "Tell her from me that I shall love her all my life. Good-by."

"I'll tole her. Gord bress yo', suh."

Smith had no idea of using the horse to escape. He was not bent on escape so much as on destruction. It fitted into his plan, however. He instantly decided what to do with him. He slunk through the yard surrounding the house, meeting no one, fortunately, and not being seen in the thick darkness by any chance watcher who might be stirring, until he reached the grove which led to the road by the river's edge above the wharf. There he soon found the horse tied to a tree. As he did so there was a commotion in the house behind him. For some reason the sentry just then reëntered his room. His escape was discovered immediately. The alarm was given. He realized that they would retake him in a few moments unless he acted promptly.

He did not hesitate. He untied the horse, knotted the bridle reins around the saddle-horn, headed the animal down the road, struck it a smart blow, and started it galloping off. Then he did what seemed to be a very foolish thing. He yelled like a madman and fired his pistol. The cry, the shot, the thundering of the horse's hoofs upon the hard shell road, were distinctly audible at the house and on the ship. The few men on the *Ellen* awakened to action.

Orders were called out. Lights appeared here and there. Smith did not wait for further developments, however. He ran a few feet to the edge of the river bank. He intended to take to the water and swim for it, but by good fortune he stumbled upon a small punt drawn up on the sandy shore. The oars were lying on the thwarts. He shoved it off noiselessly, clambered into it, shipped the oars, and disappeared in the darkness.

CHAPTER XV

THE MAJOR'S SURPRISE

Captain Haywood, seeing no prospect of getting away soon, had gone with the bulk of his command on the *Pamlico* in the hope of indulging his Southern penchant for a little fighting with the Yankees. In his absence Major Jones had taken up his quarters on the *Ellen*. The Yankee prisoners were locked up forward, and with half a dozen resolute, heavily armed seamen he felt quite equal to the task of caring for them. He had not gone to the bed which had been made up for him in the captain's room when the confusion at the house apprised him that something was wrong. In a few moments he learned that the prisoner had escaped. The sailor who brought the news, who had been the one on guard, knew nothing as to how it had been effected except that the bars across the window in the room in which the Yankee captain had been imprisoned had been pried open and the man had gone that way.

Major Jones knew that Smith must have had assistance. He was convinced at once that his daughter had afforded the prisoner the means of escape. He was more enraged at her than before, if that were possible. He had heard the horse galloping down the road and also the shouts and the pistol-shot, of

course. It was natural for him to believe that Smith had gone that way.

He acted with energy and decision. He ordered half a dozen horses saddled, mounted on them three of the *Ellen's* remaining men and three heavily armed negroes, and despatched the party in pursuit down the road with orders to bring back the prisoner dead or alive. Then he sent for his daughter. In a few moments Miss Ellen presented herself before her irate parent. She had not yet retired, either, and she had been greatly mystified and alarmed by the openness with which her lover's departure seemed to be attended.

"The prisoner," said Major Jones severely, "has escaped."

"I know it. I helped him," she answered boldly, realizing that her part in the transaction could not be hid and choosing to avow it herself without delay.

"Why?" asked her father, controlling his rising indignation with great difficulty.

"For two reasons."

"One will be sufficient."

"Nevertheless, sir, I shall give them both to you. First, I love him"—the major snorted with rage; "second, you had condemned him to death unjustly. I would not see an innocent man suffer a cruel punishment which he had not deserved, and——"

"If you were not my daughter," stormed Major Jones hotly, "I would report you to the commander of the district for treason!"

"You told me last night I was no longer your daughter, but, father——"

"Stop!" cried the old man furiously. "Do not address me in that way. What I said last night I reaffirm now. Do you know that you have cost me thousands of dollars, that I am almost ruined! That this privateer——"

"Surely you do not blame me for all these things?" protested the young woman indignantly. "I couldn't help being captured."

"I don't want to hear another word!" raged her father, who was blind with unreasoning anger, choking with uncontrollable passion. "I blame you for everything."

It was bitterly unjust, but under the circumstances it was understandable.

"But, father——" began the girl again.

"Do I have to tell you again that I do not wish to be addressed in that way by you? That I have no desire to hear more from you? That you have done enough mischief already? By Heaven, I'll see that you do no more!"

He struck the bell on the table. A man acting as master-at-arms of the *Ellen's* depleted crew appeared in the doorway.

"The keys!" demanded the major.

The man saluted and turned instantly to fetch them.

"What are you going to do with me?" asked the girl.

"Lock you in one of these cabins, where I can keep my eye on you."

"For shame, sir!" cried Miss Ellen, filled with indignation in her turn. "You don't know what

you are doing. You are beside yourself. I have done nothing dishonorable, nothing that misbecomes a woman. I have been loyal to you in all things. But I shall be no longer. You have repudiated me, you have ordered me away. I shall go. I warn you that I shall marry Captain Smith whenever he asks me."

"You'll have to be quick about it then," sneered the major; "he went down the shell road——"

"Yes, and on my horse," the girl interrupted with flashing eyes and heaving bosom.

"So I supposed. But I have sent a squad of men after him to bring him back alive or"—he had been staring at her for a second and completed his statement with a grim and unrelenting ferocity that appalled her—"alive or dead, Miss."

"I pray Heaven," said the girl passionately, uplifting her hands, "that he may escape! Surely, never was a gallant gentleman so misjudged, so misused!"

"A foundling!" sneered her father, "a no-name—a bastard most likely!"

"I will hear no more," said the girl proudly, fiercely resentful of the brutal word; "to me he is a nobler man, a truer gentleman, than"—she stopped in her turn, drew herself up, and looked straight at the major—"than many of those who have a better right to the name they bear."

"Away with you, you impudent baggage! How dare you insult me so!" thundered the irate major, beating the table with his clenched fist.

Miss Ellen turned instantly; she had never been so angry in her life.

"Which cabin," she said swiftly, "do you designate as my prison?"

"Take your choice."

She seized the handle of the nearest door at random, flung it open, threw herself into the state-room, and closed the door behind her. The master-at-arms reëntered the cabin a moment after. Her father, taking the bunch of keys from him, locked the state-room door and threw the keys on the table before him.

"The prisoners?" he queried sharply.

"They're all asleep, I think, sir, at least they're making no noise," answered the man promptly in the face of his superior's heat.

"See that good watch is kept."

"Ay, ay, sir."

The cabin after the man left was as quiet as possible. The major's anger was voiceless. Within the state-room adjacent Miss Ellen made no sound. She was choking with sobs, but she would have died rather than have her father hear them. Major Jones sat fuming moodily at the table, his eyes bent upon certain papers upon which he was endeavoring to concentrate his mind after the recent disturbance and excitement, when the door was opened so softly that the major heard nothing and did not look up at first. When he happened to raise his eyes he found himself staring into the barrel of a revolver and heard a quiet voice exclaim, almost in a whisper,—

"If you move or make a sound, you're a dead man!"

CHAPTER XVI

MASTERS OF THE SHIP

Smith had rowed across the *Ellen's* bows and out to the *Greyhound* swinging at her anchor. He had made a wide sweep and had noiselessly approached the blockade-runner under the quarter on the side away from the shore and quickly made fast to her. The ebb tide was running strong, and he had to have something to hold on to keep him from drifting down the inlet to sea. He calculated that whoever might be on the *Greyhound* would be on the shore side, attracted thereto by the noise and confusion about the house attendant upon his escape. He resolved to hang on to the *Greyhound* until matters quieted down and then drift clear of her and row back to the *Ellen.* He could hear the men on the deck above him talking. He gathered that there were but three men on the *Greyhound,* simply as shipkeepers. Her fires were drawn, evidently she lay helpless.

He waited patiently until the commotion above him had died away, and he surmised from the steady tramp of footsteps to and fro on the deck that two of the men had gone below and that the other remained on watch. Presently he heard the man on watch go forward. Now was his time. He cast off the painter, which had been passed through a ring-

bolt, and in an instant the strong current swept the boat clear of the *Greyhound*. He broke out the oars and, rowing as noiselessly as possible, headed the skiff toward the *Ellen*. Fortunately the *Greyhound* was anchored some distance up stream and it did not require any severe pulling to bring the boat alongside the privateer. Thrusting his revolver in his jacket, twisting his iron bar into his belt, he stood up in the boat and made a leap for the dolphin striker,—the *Ellen* was schooner rigged,—thrusting the boat violently away as he jumped so that she cleared the ship and disappeared in the darkness down the stream. If he succeeded he would have no need of her. If not—well, a coffin would be nearer his size than a skiff. He was staking everything on success.

Cautiously drawing himself up on the jibboom, he gained the deck, then carefully made his way along the deserted gangway. So far as he could discern in the blackness of the night there was but one man on the deck, and he stood aft in the gangway gazing at the shore. Smith, who had taken off his shoes and left them on the heel of the bowsprit, crept toward the unsuspecting Confederate. He moved as stealthily and as softly as a cat or a tiger. The luckless seaman was leaning on the rail staring shoreward through the opening made by the gangway. He had no reason to suspect the approach of anyone behind him. Creeping up close, Smith struck him a quick, heavy blow on the side of the head with his iron bar. The man dropped forward without a sound, but be-

fore he fell to the deck his assailant had clasped him in his arms and eased him down silently. The seaman's skull was crushed, and although he was not dead he was incapable of giving an alarm or, indeed, of making a sound. He had not even groaned. No one on the other side of the deck would have suspected anything, so surely and so silently had Smith worked.

"I hated to do it," muttered Smith, straightening the man's limbs on the deck, "but I had to. It was your life or mine, your duty or mine, poor fellow."

There was a light burning in the cabin abaft him. The *Ellen* was provided with a raised poop and the cabin was entered from the quarter-deck. Not knowing exactly whom he should meet, but ready for anything, the young man carefully opened the door, and, revolver in hand, confronted Major Jones.

"Well," said the major in astonishment, "you are a d—d fool!"

"I tell you to keep quiet," reiterated the younger man slowly. "Don't say another word except to answer my questions."

He shoved the barrel of the pistol in the major's face as he spoke. There was something about the look of his assailant that warned the old soldier that he was not to be trifled with under the circumstances. He bit his lips, therefore, and made no sound.

"Stand up," whispered the Yankee captain softly.

"Would you murder me?" involuntarily whispered the major as he obeyed.

"I wouldn't harm a hair on your head," answered

Smith, much to the relief of a certain young lady who was listening, and through the curtained door staring, in great excitement, from the cabin close by.

"You were going to take my life most unjustly," he continued. "I will spare yours. You're her father. I mean to have this ship. I came out to get it and I intend to do so."

"What do you wish me to do?" asked the major.

"Go aft into that cabin yonder. I regret to be compelled to bind and gag you. Silence! don't make a sound, I tell you! If it comes to your life or mine, you know which it will be."

The major was choking with suppressed wrath, but he was helpless. Into the after cabin he was marched. Smith had provided himself with a coil of light rope while he was on deck. The major's hands were tied behind his back. Then Smith thrust a gag into his mouth, laughed, and apologized for his harsh treatment.

"I am sorry," he said, "but I have to make sure of you."

Then he set the major down in a chair, hard, lashed his feet together, and finally tied him securely to the chair. He worked with desperate haste, but with the skill and assurance of a man accustomed to handling knots and ropes. Making sure that the gag was all right, and smiling in spite of himself at the futile wrath of the enraged old man, who could only express his anger by the rolling of his eyes, he closed the door softly and stepped back into the cabin.

What should he do next? He had no time for

reflection. He had to make up his mind quickly, instinctively. There was a bell on the table. He stepped to it and struck it sharply. Ellen had been about to call out when she heard the tinkle of the bell. She had to keep silent, therefore. There was suddenly a cry of alarm outside the cabin. Smith sprang quickly to the door. It was burst open by the master-at-arms. He found himself confronted with a pistol.

"What are you shouting about?" asked Smith coolly.

"The man on watch—he has been knocked senseless," answered the man before he realized his position.

"Do you want to follow in his steps?" asked Smith promptly.

"No—no—sir," stuttered the man.

"Then answer my question quickly."

"Where is Major Jones?"

"That is not my question, but I don't mind telling you that he is bound and gagged in the after cabin."

"Who—who—done it?"

"I did. Will you answer me, or shall I treat you as I did the major?"

"Great God!" exclaimed the man, startled and frightened out of his wits. "What do you want to ask me?"

"How many men are on the ship?"

"Three, sir. At least, there was before——"

"Then there is only one left besides yourself?"

"Yes, sir."

"Where is he?"

"For'ard watchin' the hatchway leadin' into the prisoners' quarters—the forehold."

"Where are the keys?"

"On the table."

"Good," said Smith, picking up the bunch. "Which is the key to the padlock securing the hatch-cover leading into the forehold where the prisoners are?"

"That short brass one, sir," answered the terrified seaman.

"If you are telling the truth, it will be well with you," said Smith, "but if not, I'll kill you the instant I find out you're lying. Now come with me."

He stepped to the door, bade the man face about, caught him by the collar, and with the pistol pressed to his temple marched him forward along the deck. They descended to the berth-deck by the main hatchway. The prisoners were confined forward. The two approached near to the man guarding the place before he discovered them. When he did recognize the master-at-arms he was too much astonished for words or action, and Smith gave him no time to recover himself.

"My man," said the captain rapidly, "your companion on deck has been killed. I have this man covered. You also are my prisoner. If you do as I tell you, I'll spare your life—keep your hand away from your weapon!"

"Jack!" cried the sailor, staring at the other, "is this true?"

"Ay," assented the master-at-arms, "Joe's been killed."

"We're done fer, then," said the other sailor.

"Lay your gun down on the hatch-cover," ordered Smith. "Now, then, face to starboard. March!"

When the man reached the ship's side he continued:

"Put your hands up, stay there, and don't make a sound unless you want to be riddled full of holes. You," to the other man, "unlock the padlocks."

He handed the bunch of keys to the unhappy master-at-arms, who had no choice but to obey his orders.

"Now lift that cover."

The hatch was thrown open.

"Below there!" Smith called out softly but sharply, his triumph thrilling in his voice, "all you *St. Lawrences* bear a hand."

"What's that?" exclaimed a sleepy voice from the darkness of the hold.

"Captain Smith. The privateer is ours. Up with you! Lively!"

"Well, dash me!" cried a deeper voice, "ef it ain't Cap'n Smith!"

"Ay, ay. Come on deck, here, Gantline! Shake a leg there! Mr. Brown! Mr. Robinson!"

The place below was full of noise now. In a second old Bob Gantline's grizzled head rose above the hatch-covering. He was followed by Mr. Brown.

"Where's Robinson?" asked Smith quickly.

"Dead, sir."

"Poor fellow! Are the engineers——"

"Both safe, sir," answered Brown, "one of them only slightly wounded."

"Jump up here at once," said Smith, greatly relieved by this piece of news. "The ship is mine. Stow these two Johnnies below. Lively!"

Out of the fifty men with whom he had boarded the *Greyhound* some thirty were in a condition for service. Fifteen had been killed, five had been so severely wounded as to be unable to get about. Well, thirty would be enough.

"Mr. Brown," said Captain Smith, when they were assembled on the spar-deck, "take ten men and Engineer Martin and go over to the *Greyhound*. She lies yonder. Take a boat from the *Ellen*. There are three or four ship-keepers on the *Greyhound*. Attend to them and then go below and get up steam immediately. Mr. Cleff," turning to the other engineer, "I want you to get up steam on the *Ellen* in the quickest time you ever did in your life. We're going out on her. Gantline, send half a dozen men to help Mr. Cleff here. Do you keep the deck for a few moments. There are arm-chests yonder. Arm the men, and if anything approaches from the wharf let me know in good time."

"Ay, ay, sir."

"I'm going into the cabin for a few minutes. Oh, I forgot. Two of you take the poor fellow in the gangway out on the wharf. Make him as comfortable as you can. His people will attend to him in the morning. I'm sorry, but I had to knock him out. Mind, you let me know if anything stirs, Gantline."

CHAPTER XVII

THE RESERVATION OF THE CAPTAIN

Having got possession of the privateer thus neatly and expeditiously, and having put matters in train for securing and taking out his prize, Captain Smith stalked aft and entered the cabin. Passing through it, he opened the door of the after cabin, cast off the lashings, pulled out the gag, and set the irate Major Jones free. The Southerner's wrath had gathered potency, his resentment had increased during his period of detention and repression. He had heard, if he had not seen, and he knew pretty well what had taken place.

"I'm sorry," said Smith politely, "to have treated a gentleman of your age and position with such apparent discourtesy, but circumstances over which I had no control compelled me to assume a harshness foreign to my nature."

"Damnation, sir!" exclaimed the prisoner as soon as he could speak.

"I wouldn't swear if I were you," remonstrated the captain.

"I don't need lessons in manners from you, sir!"

"Well, don't you think you need them from somebody, major?"

"Look here, young man, did you release me to insult me?"

"You are right, sir," answered Smith, "I beg your pardon, sir. I intend——"

"To take me to a Northern prison, I suppose."

"To let you go free. You are a non-combatant."

"By gad, sir, I won't be one long! You've taken my blockade-runner, you've taken my privateer. I hope you're satisfied, curse you! I——"

"Not quite, sir. There is one more thing I must have."

"That is?"

"Your daughter."

"Take her and be damned to you!"

"Thank you, sir. Will you kindly sit down at that table and write a note which I shall have someone take up to the house, requesting her to dress and come here?"

"No, I won't!"

"Pardon me, sir, but you are still a prisoner, you know. You must do what I say. Will you write that note?"

There was no answer.

"I asked you a question, Major Jones," repeated Captain Smith with a ring as of steel in his voice.

"It's not necessary to send for her," answered the major, sullenly defiant, "she's in there."

"In there?" exclaimed Smith, springing toward the door. "Miss Ellen!" he cried, tugging at the door to get it open.

"The door is locked," said Miss Ellen, demurely enough.

"I see." Captain Smith turned to Major Jones. "Where are the keys, sir?"

"I don't know. They were here."

"You took them with you when you went out with the man," said Miss Ellen from the inner cabin.

"Oh, yes, I remember," said the young officer, fumbling in his pocket. Drawing out the bunch, he tried half-a-dozen before he succeeded in fitting one to the lock and opened the door. Out stepped Miss Ellen.

"Were you in there all the time?"

"Yes."

"Did you hear everything?"

"Every word."

"You heard this young ruffian threaten to murder me and never made a sound!" exclaimed the major. "It's on a par with your other conduct."

"I knew he wouldn't harm you, sir."

"But if he had?"

"I should have interfered."

"By gad, you've interfered enough in the last two days, you faithless——"

"Pardon me, Major Jones," said Captain Smith, "but I will not allow you to address Miss Jones in this manner. Remember, you are still a prisoner."

"Am I a prisoner too?" queried Miss Ellen.

"You are as free as the air."

"What are you going to do?"

"We're getting steam up as fast as we can and I'm going out to sea with the two ships"—the major groaned. "Will you go with me, Miss Ellen?—

your daughter is my promised wife, Major,—or do you prefer to stay with your father?"

"I tell you I will have none of her!" interrupted the old man savagely. "She has betrayed me. She has been false to me. She has left me. If you want her, take her. I could wish you no worse fortune."

"By Heaven, sir!" said Smith, thoroughly indignant now, "if you give voice to another insult I'll gag you again!"

"Remember, he is my father," remonstrated the girl, laying her hand on her lover's arm.

"I don't admit it," snarled the old man.

"Miss Ellen," said Smith quietly, "we are going away. You can go as my passenger or you can go as—in any capacity you please—or you can stay."

"I will go, and as your promised wife, or not at all."

"Bah!" snorted the old soldier.

"Just a moment, sir," said the captain. "Those words are sweet to me, and I don't want the effect spoiled by any irrelevant interruptions from you. Miss Ellen, do you go with me because your father turns you off or——"

"I go with you because I love you," said the girl, standing very erect and looking directly at him.

He took her hand with an old-fashioned gesture which well became him and kissed it.

"May God condemn me if I ever cause you to regret this decision! Major Jones, when you are ready to leave you are free. I regret more than I can express the loss you have sustained. My share of the

prize-money will be considerable. I shall be glad to make it over to you."

"I wouldn't touch a penny of your money!" shouted the old man wrathfully.

"Then I shall see that it goes where I presume your property would eventually have gone, to your daughter."

"Not a cent of money shall she get from me!"

"That makes no difference to you, does it?" asked the girl quickly.

"Miss Ellen, this makes me more anxious to win you than ever," he responded fervently.

Just here old Bob Gantline burst unceremoniously into the cabin.

"The boatswain's mate!" exclaimed Miss Ellen, starting back.

"He's after me this time," laughed the captain.

"Cap'n Smith," said the old sailor in great alarm, "there's some boats comin' up the inlet, sir. The oars seems to be muffled, but we kin make 'em out, sir. There's half a dozen on 'em, an'——"

"Wait," said the captain, leaping for the door.

"My turn now," sneered the major triumphantly.

"Not yet," answered Smith, disappearing.

As he reached the deck he became aware of a small group of horsemen who galloped up the road and halted on the wharf. They dismounted, and one of their number came toward the *Ellen*. They were the nearest foemen, and they must be attended to first. The American sailors on the privateer were armed with cutlasses, guns, and bayonets. In the darkness

they had not been able to get any powder yet. There were still five shots in Smith's revolver, however. He ran to the gangway.

"Back!" he cried. "Stay where you are or I fire."

This was the party of men Major Jones had dispatched after Smith. The approaching man did not stop, and the others, who had dismounted, started toward the ship. The revolver cracked and the foremost man shrieked and fell, a bullet through his shoulder.

"What's the meaning of this?" shouted the second man.

"This ship is in possession of the United States. If you do not wish to be shot down, run for your lives."

The men turned and fled instantly, taking with them their wounded comrade.

"The boats, sir," said Gantline, "they're close aboard."

Smith ran to the other side. There he discerned a black blur on the water. He heard the unmistakable "cheep" of oars in the rowlock—a man-of-war stroke, he thought. As he stared he made out a second, then a third. His heart sank within him. Was he to lose all after all? At least, they should have a fight for it.

"Men," he said, "we'll make 'em fight like hell when they come alongside."

The statement was received with cheers by the *St. Lawrence's* men, led by Gantline. The boats were closer now, concealment was no longer possible.

There was an answering cheer from the water. The men on the thwarts bent to the oars.

"That's no rebel yell," cried Smith excitedly.

"That's a man-o'-war stroke an' a man-o'-war cheer," cried Gantline.

"Boat ahoy!" shouted Smith, hollowing his hand.

There was no answer from any of the boats, now close aboard.

"We have captured this privateer!" roared Smith. They could lose nothing by telling the truth now. "We're from the *St. Lawrence*. Keep off. Declare yourselves, or I'll fire! Who are you?"

"I believe I know that voice," cried a voice from the nearest boat.

"Dillingham?" exclaimed Smith eagerly.

"Ay, is it Captain Smith?"

"It is."

"Well, I'll be damned!" exclaimed Dillingham, swinging his boat alongside. "I always get there too late," he said disgustedly as he mounted to the deck. "Not hearing from you, the commodore got anxious and ventured to send the *Wamego* through the inlet and across the sound. Nobody saw us. We had no chart and had to wait until nightfall, and then, not daring to take the ship in here, Captain Chase gave me this boat expedition. We supposed you were killed or captured."

"Not a bit of it," said Smith confidently, "we're just getting up steam to get away. I'm awfully glad you came, though. Bring your men on board and send one boat's crew over to the *Greyhound*. I want to bring her out as well."

"Do you know the river?"

"I marked it well when I came in and I guess I can get along."

"Beg pardon, sir," said a man coming out of the darkness, "but Mr. Cleff says that he'll have steam up in five minutes."

"Quick work, that," said Smith gleefully; "we'll cast off at once. First, I want you to come into the cabin a moment, Dillingham."

"Luck is against you, Major," said Smith genially, "the boats are ours, not yours. Allow me to present to you Lieutenat John B. Dillingham, of the United States ship *Wamego*."

"Glad to meet you, sir," said Dillingham, who was very much mystified.

"It's more than I am," said the major, turning his back.

"And this," said the captain, facing Dillingham about, "is Miss Ellen Jones, my affianced wife."

"Well, you are in luck," said Dillingham with a sailor's frankness; "and you have reason to be congratulated as well, Madam."

"Are you through with me?" asked the major.

"Yes," answered Smith, "we're about to cast off."

"Father," said Miss Ellen piteously, "before I go won't you——"

"Silence!" cried the unrelenting old man. "You've got a fool for a husband and he's got——"

"You're not off the ship yet, Major," said Smith warningly; "you can call me a fool if you like, but you'd better stop right there. You can't say anything against my promised wife."

The major stamped his foot in rage and stalked out of the cabin.

"Dillingham," said Smith, "see him over the side, will you? I'll be out in a moment."

"I understand," said Dillingham, smiling.

"Oh," said Smith, approaching the blushing Miss Ellen when they were alone, "I thought you were a traitor. But you are an angel!"

"No," said the girl, choking back a sob, "only a woman whose father has cast her off, who has nothing but——"

"I shall try to be everything to you," said the young man.

"You will have to be," said Miss Ellen, smiling through her tears, and then she was lost in his arms.

The evening after these exciting adventures the little flotilla, led by the privateer, with the blockade-runner in the middle and the gunboat in the rear, flags flying from every masthead, rounded to under the lee of the *St. Lawrence,* which had been cruising to and fro on the ocean off Ocracoke Inlet. A boat was called away on the *Ellen* and rowed to the frigate.

"Commodore," said the triumphant Smith to the old sailor, who met him at the gangway, "yonder is the *Ellen* and here"—he turned and took the hand of a young lady who had preceded him up the battens—"is the lady?"

"Did you bring them both to me, sir?" laughed the commodore.

"No, sir. You may have the privateer. The lady I reserve for myself," was the reply of the victor.

II

The Girl on the River

II

The Girl on the River

CHAPTER I

A FORTUNATE MEETING

Mr. John Sears was walking rapidly down one of the streets of Cairo—Illinois, not Egypt!—which led to the wharves on the water's edge. He had completed his errand, which was to lay some important papers before the military commander of the district, and so was in a great hurry to rejoin his ship. His attention was attracted by, what seemed to be, the familiar figure of a man in a blue uniform darting across the street some distance ahead of him and plunging into an alleyway. He quickened his pace, with an evident desire to overhaul the man, who had got athwart his hawse—as a sailor would say—muttering to himself as he hurried along: "That looks like——"

He never finished the sentence, for, from out of the same alleyway into which the blue-clad man had disappeared, there burst upon his vision another in-

dividual, a woman magnificently mounted upon a superb horse. She was going rapidly, and evidently desired to increase her pace, for she struck the horse a smart blow with her riding whip as she entered the street. The horse gave a sudden spring, and then something happened.

The saddle had not been properly girthed, for it began to turn. The girl strove to rein in the horse, but, with her shifting saddle, had no purchase by which to apply her strength. She screamed loudly, and in that instant Sears was by her side. She had dropped the reins and had caught the horse by the mane. He sprang to the bridle and grasped it so powerfully that he stopped the horse at once. Then, having spoken a few soothing words to the startled animal, he stretched out his left hand and assisted the woman to reach the ground. The saddle came clattering down with her. She stood by the horse white and trembling as she became conscious of the deadly peril she had so narrowly escaped.

"That was splendidly done, sir," she said, when she could command herself. "I owe you a great deal."

"It was a near thing for you, ma'am," he answered, simply.

"Near!" she replied. "In another second I should have been under his heels. I had lost control of him. I couldn't get my foot out of the stirrup. I thank you more than I can say."

"Don't mention it. It was most fortunate that I happened to be at hand."

It was, indeed, fortunate for the woman, and Sears

counted it equally fortunate for himself, for he thought he had never looked upon so beautiful a girl as was she who stood hesitatingly by his side. She seemed somewhat at loss as to what to do next, for she looked at him curiously without speaking.

"What do you wish to do now?" he continued, breaking a pause which threatened to become awkward.

"If you can secure my saddle again, I must ride on. I am in a great hurry."

"So am I," answered the man, smiling at her eagerness. "If you will hold the horse, ma'am, I will look to the saddle. It's all right," he continued, after a brief inspection; "the girth wasn't properly tightened. I'll have it ready for you in a moment."

"You say you are in a great hurry also?" interrupted the girl, while he was busy with the saddle.

"Yes."

"Forgive me, sir, but are you—I am sure you must be—that is, you are not a Southern man?"

"I am attached to the Federal gunboat *Harrison*, yonder."

"Oh, I am so sorry——" began the girl, impulsively.

"Why?" asked the man directly, looking curiously at her.

"Well—er—because I am Southern, you see."

"That explains it. Your horse is ready. May I have the privilege?"

Seizing her in his arms, he literally lifted her from the ground into the saddle. It was a tremendous feat of strength, but in some way he felt on his

mettle with this flower of the South, and was determined to show what he could do.

"That was splendid again!" said the girl, smiling her appreciation. "How strong you are! I did not know that Northern men, especially sailors, knew so much about horses."

"I am no sailor," returned the man, shortly.

"Yet you said you belonged to the gunboat?"

"I do."

"Well, it is nothing to me. I only regret that there is no way which I can show my gratitude. Good-by, sir, and thank you again."

She gave him her hand, which, as the most gallant Southern man might have done, he respectfully kissed.

"May I not know your name?" he asked.

She shook her head.

"Shall we not meet again?" he begged.

"I fear not. Good-by."

He stepped back instantly and raised his hat. She spoke to her horse, touched him with the whip and galloped off. He watched her until she turned the corner. Then, since he had lost so much time, he ran down the street until he reached the gunboat, where he found the flag officer on the upper deck fuming at his delay.

"I couldn't help it, sir," the culprit reported, detailing the incident.

"Oh, you're always getting mixed up with women," remarked the older man somewhat testily, giving the signal to cast off.

"By the way, sir," said the delinquent, his thoughts

suddenly recurring to the man in blue, whom he thought he had recognized, "did anyone leave the boat this morning?"

"No one but you," answered the other, turning away.

"I must have been mistaken," thought Sears. "I wonder where that girl was going? South somewhere. She seemed in a great hurry."

CHAPTER II

THE MASKED BATTERY

Ten hours later the *Harrison* was slowly dropping down the narrow bayou.

The *Harrison* was an old river steamer—a side-wheeler—which had been altered into a man-of-war gunboat by building six-foot oak bulwarks around the guards, by dropping the boilers into the hold and by lowering the steam pipes as much as possible. She mounted six 64-pounders in broadside, three on a side, and one 32-pounder in the stern. With her sister ships, the *Lexington,* the *Tyler* and the *Conestoga,* she had been hastily made ready in 1861 for an attempt to open the Mississippi River.

From Columbus to New Orleans, on every point of land high enough to command the channel, which was otherwise fairly defensible, the Confederates had planted batteries. The first works of any importance below Cairo, which was in the hands of the Federal troops, and was therefore the base from which the gunboat squadron operated, were on Halligan's Bluff.

While waiting for some of the combined movements of the army and navy which were projected, the flag officer determined to try out his gunboat in actual fighting, at the same time seeing if he could not eliminate the battery on Halligan's Bluff from

future calculations. Three gunboats of his flotilla were busy elsewhere at the time. Two of them were scouting in the Ohio River. One had gone up the Mississippi to St. Louis, but was expected back on the night of the day the *Harrison* started out. The flag officer concluded not to wait for her.

The gunboats had had no trial as yet against the forts, and no one knew what could be done with them. The flag officer—albeit he was a veteran of over fifty years of sea service—was as daring as a boy. He had made up his mind to attack Halligan's Bluff at the first favorable opportunity. The favorable opportunity had come.

Just north of the bluff there was a large but thickly wooded island cut off from the mainland by a narrow, twisting bayou. In ordinary weather the water in this bayou was very shallow and navigation was not possible, especially for a boat the size of the *Harrison*. The river happened, however, to be at a very high stage. The flag officer consulted with his pilot and decided to try the bayou. If he could work through it, he could gain a position on the flank of the fort, and, by means of his guns, could, as he phrased it, seamanlike, "rake the works fore and aft, and clear the decks of the enemy."

In spite of the high water, however, the pilot had demurred to the attempt, but the flag officer had assumed all responsibility and insisted. It would have been better to approach the works at night, but the pilot declared that it would be absolutely impossible to take the *Harrison* through the tortuous bayou unless he had plenty of light.

Unless the Confederates kept very negligent watch, they would certainly discover the approach of the gunboat. Whether they could do so in time to make provision for her arrival was a thing that could only be determined by trying. So five o'clock in the evening found the *Harrison* slowly ramming her way through the overhanging undergrowth or sliding over the bars of the bayou.

Up in the pilot house ahead were the pilot, the flag officer and young Sears, the flag officer's private secretary, or clerk. Sears was no sailor. At least he was not a naval officer. He happened to be the flag officer's nephew, and, as he was alone in the world and possessed of a considerable fortune, he had enjoyed plenty of liberty to go cruising all over the globe with his uncle.

At the outbreak of the war he had refused a commission in the volunteer navy, having no liking for its restraints, and had chosen to accompany the flag officer in the nondescript capacity of clerk, or secretary, when he was ordered to service in the *Mississippi*. The slow beat of the *Harrison's* engines was plainly audible all over the island and the adjacent shore.

"I've no doubt," said the flag officer, reflectively, "that they know we're coming."

"Yes, sir," answered the young man, who was very punctilious in public, and was most careful never to presume on his relationship save in the privacy of his uncle's cabin—and not greatly there!—"they certainly must, unless they're deaf."

"P'raps they won't be lookin' for us," put in the pilot.

"Unless they are fools as well as deaf," returned the flag officer, "they will have a dozen scouts out watching us, and our every movement will have been reported."

"No hope for a surprise, then, sir?" asked the clerk.

"I don't know about that. Unless they have previously made provision for an attack from this direction, it's hardly likely they'll have time to do it with the short warning we have given them. We've been less than two hours in the bayou."

"By the Mark Twain!" sang out the leadsman forward.

"There isn't much water between the bottom of the boat and the bed of the river, eh, pilot?"

"Not much, cap," said the pilot, grimly, throwing the head of the gunboat over to starboard and jamming her so close under the bank that the overhanging tree branches swept the guards. "We'll be 'round the last bend in a few minutes. Yonder it lays," continued the old river man, pointing ahead. "If you're goin' to do somethin' with them guns of your'n, you'd better git 'em ready fer shootin'."

The pilot was full of the independence of his trade and profession. He cared not a whit for naval officers of whatsoever rank. The flag officer stepped out of the pilot house, descended to what the sailors on the boat called the "gun-deck," and spoke with his first lieutenant. Everything was ready. The men were at quarters, the guns were cast loose and provided. All was ship-shape below. Presently he rejoined the other two in the pilot house.

"'Round that turn does it," said the pilot, deftly swinging clear of a threatening snag.

"Very good," returned the flag officer, coolly. "We're quite ready."

"The bayou opens out a leetle thar," continued the pilot, "an' onless the wash of the high water has changed the channel, I reckon you kin swing your port side so as to bring all them big guns of yourn to b'ar."

"We'll give 'em a broadside," said the flag officer, "so soon as we have a chance."

"All ready now, then," said the pilot, reversing the wheel rapidly and swinging the head of the gunboat to starboard.

As he did so the *Harrison* rounded the last bend, and suddenly found herself in a stretch of comparatively open water, ending, perhaps, a quarter of a mile away, in the tawny flood of the Mississippi. Before her were the earthworks covering a heavy battery. Above them floated the Confederate flag. Sure enough, however, there was no protection on the side which the *Harrison* had reached. By giving her guns their highest elevation they easily bore. What current there was in the sluggish estuary was swinging past the bluff into the Mississippi.

The flag officer caught hold of a rope. Bells jangled sharply below. The engines stopped. He leaned out of the pilot house and called out a quick command. An anchor was dropped from the aftermost end of the gunboat. She stopped. The current slowly swung her broadside toward the battery.

"We've got 'em now!" cried the flag officer. "Aim carefully, men. Fire!"

The heavy guns of the steamer rang out in unison. The vessel shook with the suddenness of the concussion. The veteran men-o'-war's men in the battery made good practice. One shot smashed the flagstaff. Another dismounted one of the guns of the fort. A third sent a shell, which exploded around one of the gun crews. The Confederates scampered away like rabbits.

"This is a fine manœuvre of yours, sir," said young Sears, gleefully, "you've got 'em just where you want them. They can make no reply."

"I ain't so sure 'bout that," interrupted the pilot, warningly; "look yonder."

He pointed to the opposite bank. There was a movement in the undergrowth; a filtering ray of sunlight through the leaves gleamed on steel.

"There's something there, I'll——"

Crash!

The shore not a hundred yards away was shrouded in smoke and shot with fire.

"A masked battery!" cried Sears.

"Field pieces! Army guns!" exclaimed the flag officer, as he heard the shot ripping through the thin oak planking of the gunboat.

"Never mind the fort, men," he cried, "we must attend to those fellows first."

The seamen had been loading the great guns with the rapidity of veterans. The breeches were elevated, the muzzles depressed, and three 64-pound shells exploded in the vicinity of the masked battery on the river edge. The distance was short, the aim perfect. The noise of the exploding shells was succeeded by

shrieks and curses, and then one solitary gun from the shore sped a shot which, luckily for the Confederates, tore through the wooden bulkhead of the gunboat and exploded the port boiler. A half score of men were badly scalded, and the *Harrison* was rendered helpless in an instant. Helpless, that is, for advance or retreat. Her guns still bore. Another broadside completely demolished the battery, now plainly visible from the gaps in the trees that had been made by the exploding shells. The slaughter among the Confederate gunners was fearful.

Back of the gunboat, however, there was a low promontory of land. Guns placed there could fire on the *Harrison* without being in danger of a return. So long as matters remained in *statu quo* the *Harrison* was safe. She had nothing to fear from the fort, an occasional shot would keep it clear of its garrison, nor had she anything to fear from the battery, for all its guns had been put out of action. If the Confederates could bring up any more field guns—and there were plenty of them at Columbus—and place them in that position, the gunboat would have to surrender or be sunk at her moorings. The flag officer thought quickly.

"Mr. Sears," he said to his secretary, "we are helpless, you see. We can't get away. If the enemy plants a battery on that point off our quarter we'll have to strike flag or sink. The *Lexington* ought to be back in Cairo by this time. And there's that big army tug there, the *Canonicus*. I must get word somehow or other to the gunboat and the tug to come down and pull us out."

"Yes, sir, I'll go at once."

"Ay, but how?"

"Put me ashore yonder and I'll steal a horse somewhere and get up to Cairo somehow. The road is direct enough, and cuts off the bends of the river."

"The woods are full of Rebs, I don't doubt."

"I can't help that, sir," answered the young man. "Besides, it will be dark in a short time."

"All right," said the flag officer, "get yourself ready and then report to me in my cabin."

When Sears tapped on the door of the flag officer's cabin and was bidden to enter, his uncle handed him a sealed paper.

"Here are orders for the gunboat and the tug to come down and extricate us."

"Very good, sir."

"Tell the captain of the *Lexington,* or whoever is up there, that he'll have to come through the bayou. I don't want to risk the gunboat through the channel under the guns of the battery on the bluff. I want you to make haste now. That's all. Now, Jack," continued the old man, dropping his command manner and reaching out his hand to his young nephew, of whom he was very fond, "it's a dangerous cruise you've got before you, and everything depends upon you. You must get through and bring the boats to our rescue, but don't get reckless."

"I won't, Uncle John," said Sears, shaking the flag officer's hand. "I want a boat to put me ashore on the other side. It's quite dark now, and I don't believe there are any Rebels in the woods yonder."

"No, I guess we've cleared them out there. Very

well. Tell Mr. Darling "—the first lieutenant—" to put you ashore. Good-by."

" Good-by, sir."

Five minutes after Mr. Sears stepped out of the boat on the mainland opposite the island. The men had rowed up the bayou with the utmost caution. The oars had been muffled, and Sears did not believe he had been observed in the darkness. Requesting the midshipman in charge of the boat to remain under the lee of the bank for a short time, until he saw how the land lay, Sears scrambled up the bluff and examined the country as well as he could.

Sure enough, as he had expected, before him ran a highway. It was very dark under the trees now, although it was lighter in the open road. He stood listening a moment, peering into the gloom. Presently he heard the slow footfalls of horses. He slunk back into the shadow of the underbrush, drew his revolver and waited breathless. The horses were coming down the road at a slow walk. Their riders stopped them within a few feet of him.

" Miss Edith," said a man, " you know all depends upon you."

" I know," answered another and softer voice. It seemed very familiar to the listener, but he could not quite place it.

" I've got no officer left to send for a battery," continued the first speaker. " My men are so demoralized by the fire of that Yankee gunboat, which has wrecked all our guns, that I don't dare trust any of them."

" I volunteered," returned the woman, quickly, even eagerly. " I am anxious to go."

"Very well. You know you are to tell Colonel Chillingport, at Columbus, that we've got a Yankee gunboat stranded and helpless out here in the bayou, and if he can send down a battery to take the place of mine, we can sink her or make her surrender. It must be done quickly, though."

"I shall not spare my horse," answered the girl.

"I hate to let you go alone, Miss Edith, but I don't dare leave——"

"It's all right. We're all for the South here. No one will hurt me. I am anxious to go, to render any service to our beloved country."

"All right, then. Good-by."

Just then a shot from the distant gunboat thundered through the forest.

"They're at it again! I must go," said the officer, wheeling his horse and galloping back toward the place where the remnants of his men lay concealed.

The woman hesitated not a moment; she lifted her head, gathered up the reins and spoke to the horse. Before he could move, however, a hand grasped the bridle and checked him.

"Who is it?" asked the woman, a sudden note of alarm in her voice.

"I shall have to ask you to come down from that horse," commanded Mr. Sears, quickly but politely.

For answer the woman lifted her riding whip and struck vigorously at him. He threw up his right hand. His left still retained the bridle of the rearing, plunging, frightened horse. The whip struck his forearm. The next instant the woman was conscious of the barrel of a pistol thrust within a short

distance of her face as she bent forward over the horse.

"I don't want to hurt you, but if you make a sound I'll have to fire! Drop that whip!"

She hesitated for a second, then the whip fell to the ground.

"Now, then, please dismount."

The man's voice was imperative, although his words were polite enough. The hand that held the revolver did not tremble. The woman realized that her captor meant business. Disengaging her feet from the stirrups she slipped to the ground.

"Face toward the river bank," ordered the man. "Now march forward."

"What are you going to do with me, sir?" asked the woman.

"Nothing. I wouldn't harm a hair of your head."

"Then I'll scream," said the prisoner, promptly, suiting the action to the word, and shrieking out "Help! help!" in a shrill, high-pitched feminine voice.

Just as she did so there was another shot from the *Harrison*. The flag officer was keeping the Confederates awake by firing one of her guns alternately at the battery and the fort every two minutes during the night. The sound of her cry was drowned by the roar of the gun, yet her scream met with a quick if unexpected response. There was a crashing in the underbrush of the river bank before Sears and his captive, and two persons, a young boy and a sailor, scrambled up the bluff.

"Is that you, Edgerly?" asked Sears.

"Yes, sir," answered the midshipman. "What's up?"

"I've captured a horse and a woman. The woman you will take to the gunboat and keep until I return."

"Sir," protested the woman, "do you mean to make me a prisoner?"

"I don't mean to let you carry any message to Colonel Chillingport, at Columbus, which will result in the loss of that gunboat," answered Sears, coolly. "No harm is intended you. You will be perfectly safe if you keep quiet. I pledge you my word of honor that the flag officer will release you when I get back."

"I won't go!" said the woman, stubbornly.

"And don't speak so loud or scream again, or I'll have to order you gagged, which I should regret," went on Mr. Sears, quickly. "Now, go."

"I won't, I tell you!"

"You'll have to go if we have to carry you, madam," said the young midshipman, sharply.

"You're a brute!" choked the woman, turning away.

"Very good. See that she doesn't get away, Edgerly."

"All right, sir," answered the midshipman. "This way, ma'am."

CHAPTER III

MR. SEARS PAYS FOR A HORSE

Sears waited until the boat shoved off. Then he turned to the horse, unbuckled the saddle, laid it aside in the underbrush and sprang on the horse bareback. He could ride anything in any guise. He struck up the river road, which ke knew would lead him to Cairo, some twenty miles away. The horse was a thoroughbred, perfectly fresh, and carried his new rider forward at a great pace. Sears did not spare him. There were too many dangerous possibilities hanging on his action to permit of a moment's delay for any cause. He sped the gallant animal up the road at a terrific gallop.

A mile or so from the outskirts of Cairo he ran into a raiding detachment of Confederate scouts, but broke through it without difficulty. Although they sent several shots after him in the dark he was untouched; not so the horse. Just as he entered Cairo, about ten o'clock at night, the brave animal, which had been going more slowly, in spite of the urging of his rider, faltered, staggered and fell. In the dash through the Confederate cavalry he had been shot; and this was the end of him. Sears waited a few moments until he saw that the horse was dying,

and then, with a pang of regret, picked up his sword and ran through the streets.

By great good fortune, just as he reached the wharf, the *Lexington* was swinging into her landing place. She had arrived just in time. He hailed her and was at once taken aboard. Fortunately the *Canonicus,* the army tug, had steam up, and both vessels were soon plunging down the river at their very best speed.

Sears, as has been said, was a rich man. He always kept a considerable supply of money by him, preferably gold, in the present unsettled state of the currency. So soon as he had delivered his orders and made his report to the *Lexington* and the tug, and they were on their way to the rescue of the *Harrison,* Sears went down to the engine room and busied himself with some strange metallurgical experiments.

On account of the bend of the river, the distance from Cairo was much greater than by the road. It was two o'clock in the morning before the two boats, whose speed was not great at best, and which had to proceed with caution on account of the night, reached the other end of the bayou.

As the moon had just risen, the pilot of the *Lexington* concluded that he could carry the boat through the bayou by moonlight. It was four, and the day was just dawning when the *Lexington* rounded the last bend and hailed the *Harrison.* Sears, who was in the pilot house, was greatly relieved when he saw the flag officer's gunboat just as he had left it. Close behind the *Lexington* came the powerful army tug.

" I suppose you want us to get you out right away,

sir?" asked the captain of the *Lexington,* hailing the flag officer standing abaft the pilot house.

"Not quite. We must finish that fort before we leave."

"Good!" exclaimed the captain of the *Lexington,* delighted at the opportunity for a little real war.

"Just drop down ahead of us, please, and we'll both open fire on them," continued the flag officer. "Tell the tug yonder to come alongside me and make fast."

"Shall I send you aboard the *Harrison,* Mr. Sears?" asked the captain of the *Lexington,* after he hailed the tug transmitting the flag officer's orders.

"It won't be necessary," answered the clerk. "You'll have to pass very close to her in these narrow waters, and I think I can jump aboard."

The manœuvre was entirely practicable, and presently the young man reported to his uncle.

"You have a prisoner of mine aboard, sir, I believe."

"Ah," said the flag officer, "she's below in my cabin, and a madder woman I never saw, nor a prettier, you young dog."

"I give you my word of honor, sir, that I didn't know whether she was white or black."

"Well, go below and look after her. I sha'n't need you any more."

"Thank you, sir," cried Sears, delighted with the prospect.

He knocked softly at the cabin door, and, receiving no answer, finally walked in. On a chair before the table sat a young woman, her face buried in her hands.

"I beg your pardon, madam——"

"Who are you, sir?" said the woman, lifting her head.

She was pale and haggard from loss of sleep and from mental anxiety, but Sears recognized her at once, and again he thought he had never seen so beautiful a woman. As her eyes fell full upon him, a startled exclamation burst from her lips.

"Why, you are the gentleman who saved me yesterday morning!" she cried.

"Yes," he answered, readily, "and who had the honor—or the misfortune—to be your captor of last night.

"The latter act cancels the first, sir."

"Oh, I hope not."

"It does, of course."

Just then the guns of the *Harrison* banged away. They were followed a few seconds after by those of the *Lexington.*

"What is that?" cried the girl, starting to her feet.

"I'm afraid that's the end of your friends on the bluff yonder."

"You cowards!" exclaimed the woman, "to get into a position from which you cannot be shot at and blow up the poor, helpless gunners!"

"But if I remember aright," remonstrated Sears, mildly, "you were going to bring a battery to do just that thing for us."

"That's different."

Mr. Sears laughed. Again the broadside cut loose.

"Where is my horse?" asked the girl, impulsively.

"I am sorry to say that he was shot."

"That was a needless bit of malice on your part," returned the prisoner. "Couldn't you have used him without killing him?"

"Pardon me, your friends did it. I ran into a Reb—Confederate scouting party and they fired at me, missed me, but killed your horse."

"What a pity!"

"That they missed me or that they hit the horse!"

"Both. One Confederate horse is worth a dozen Yankees."

"Thank you, ma'am," said Sears, detecting a glimmer of a smile on the girl's face.

"Beg pardon, sir," said Mr. Edgerly, sticking his head into the cabin, "but the flag officer says the fort is silenced, and he's sending a shore party to spike the guns. If you want to see it you'd better get up on deck."

"Will you come also?" asked Mr. Sears, politely, to the young woman.

"I have no desire to witness the discomfiture of my helpless countrymen," she replied, haughtily.

"You will excuse me, then?"

"With pleasure."

Covered by the gun fire of the *Harrison,* a party of men from the *Lexington* had manned the boats and were rowing to the shore. The works on the bluff were utterly untenable. The Confederates had finally abandoned them after the first broadsides. They had rallied in the trees back of the fort, however, and opened fire upon the shore party. A few well-placed shots from the *Lexington* drove them to

further cover, and the shore party spiked the guns and returned to their boats without molestation. The flag officer had not forgotten the possibilities of offense in the remains of field battery; for, at intervals, just on the venture, the aftermost broadside gun of the *Harrison* sped a random shell through the woods. The powerful tug was by this time fastened to the *Harrison.*

"So long as we have put that fort out of action," said the flag officer, "there's no reason why we can't drop down the river and get back to Cairo on the outside of the island, instead of trusting this bayou. Signal the *Lexington* to come alongside and give us a line so soon as we get out into the main stream," he continued, addressing Mr. Darling. "Then weigh anchor and get under way. The tug can take us that far with the current easily."

"That prisoner, sir," interrupted the clerk. "I said that she should go free——"

"Oh, very well," said the flag officer. "We'll put her ashore before we leave the bayou. Go and tell her so. I don't want to load the gunboat with women folk."

"Miss—pardon me, I do not know your name —" said Sears, as he once more approached the girl in the cabin.

"It isn't necessary that you should."

"Quite so. I gave you my word of honor that I would not hold you prisoner, so, with the flag officer's permission, I am going to put you ashore."

"Thank you. That doesn't give me back my horse, however."

"No, it does not. But I am prepared, having expended him in the service of the country, to pay for him."

"Do you think I would touch Federal greenbacks!"

"I intend to pay you in gold."

"It's the same thing. Do you think I would handle money that bears the eagle of the United States upon it?"

"I believed that you would urge just such a foolish objection as that, so I melted one hundred and fifty dollars in gold down into little ingots while on board the *Lexington* last night. Here it is."

He drew from his pocket a number of little, irregular slabs of the precious metal.

"I don't know why I should not accept the money," said the girl, slowly. "You had no right to my horse. This will mean much for the poor fellows in our army. I will take it."

"You honor me," returned Mr. Sears, politely.

"I don't do it for that. It is despoiling the enemy."

"The boat's ready, sir," said Edgerly, again interrupting, "and the flag officer says for you to bear a hand. He wants to get out of this and away."

"Allow me," said the young man, extending his hand.

"I can go myself, thank you," returned the girl, drawing herself up scornfully. She followed him out of the cabin to the gangway, where she entered the boat without assistance.

He took his place in the stern sheets by her side,

and in a few moments stopped the cutter near the bank where he had captured her the night before.

"I presume this place will be as suitable a landing place as any for you?"

"As well as any other."

"I am very sorry about the horse."

"You paid for it. Do not apologize further."

"I shall not, then. I hope this won't be our last meeting."

"Your hopes differ from mine," answered the girl, sharply."

During this little colloquy Sears had been scanning the shore. He purposely stopped the boat where the water was shallow, so that there was, perhaps, a space of five feet of muddy water before the bank was reached. The prow of the boat slid softly up into the mud.

"I shall have to assist you here, whether you like it or not," he said, rising to his feet, as the girl looked with dismay at the muddy water between her and the shore. He stepped overboard recklessly, and, before she could interpose an objection, seized her in his arms and lightly carried her to the shore.

"I believe you landed me here purposely, you odious Yankee," she exclaimed, indignantly, as he set her down on dry ground.

"I certainly did," he answered, laughing lightly. "Good-by, Miss—Edith. I shall try to see you again."

She waited until she felt safe from recapture, and then called after him triumphantly:

"I did it! I told them you were coming."

"I thought so," answered Sears, politely lifting his hat to her.

In a great rage she turned her back on him without another word. Nor did she look back, although she was dying to do so, until the boat had rounded the bend in pursuit of the already moving steamboats.

"And so you killed the girl's horse?" commented the old flag officer, after hearing a detailed account of his nephew's adventures.

"Yes, sir, but I paid for it before I put her ashore."

"Humph! How much?"

"A hundred and fifty, Uncle John."

"What! Of course, you know the government won't repay you."

"I don't want repayment."

"Well, you paid dear for your fun, I think."

"Oh, I don't know about that. She was a mighty pretty girl," said Sears, gravely. "I intend to see her again."

CHAPTER IV

THE SECRET DISPATCH

"JACK," said the flag officer, a few weeks later, "I believe we have a traitor on board."

"Yes, sir," answered his nephew.

"The way those rebels had that battery all ready for us in the affair at Halligan's Bluff first made me suspicious. And every time a move has been contemplated since then the enemy seems to have got wind of our plans."

"Do you suspect anyone?"

"I do," replied the flag officer.

"Who is it, sir, if I may ask?"

"It's Jenks."

"What! The secret service man?"

"The same."

"But wasn't he well accredited to you?"

"Entirely so, of course, or he wouldn't have been used, but—well—I never liked the man, and as there is a leak somewhere, and as it could not come from you or from me, it must come from him."

"Why don't you have him brought before you and tax him with it?" suggested the secretary.

"That wouldn't do at all," said the old sailor. "In the first place, I have positively no proof against him. In the second place, if he is guilty he must

have accomplices somewhere, and unless we can bag the whole party, run down the whole scheme, it isn't much use to tackle him."

"I see," returned the other, "you want to catch him in the act?"

"Exactly."

"Well, I guess I'm ready for the job, uncle."

"I thought you would be."

"Yes, it's just the sort of thing I like to do. That's why I didn't enlist in the regular service. It gives me so much more freedom for little affairs of this kind."

"Quite so," returned his uncle, severely, "but don't count on too much freedom on a ship, lad. Even though I am your uncle and this is an old river paddle boat, a nondescript, that I have the honor to fly my broad pennant over."

"No, sir, I won't," answered Sears, promptly.

"Now Jenks is going out to-night with a dispatch for our troops opposite Paducah. I could send a gunboat up the river, but I need the gunboats here, and it is important to a general movement we are projecting that there should be no miscarriage of this dispatch."

"Yes, sir."

The flag officer paused and reflected.

"I think I shall make the dispatch out in duplicate, giving one to him and——"

"You want me to carry the other?" asked his nephew.

"What do you think about it?"

"I'll do it with the greatest pleasure. You know

as I am not enlisted regularly in the Service of the United States Government and really have no right to wear a uniform, I will just go in my ordinary clothing and deliver the dispatch. There will be little risk."

"That will be only half the job I have mapped out for you."

"What's the rest?"

"If Jenks attempts to play us false you must stop him from delivering his dispatch to his confederates, whoever they may be. If he goes through all right, then you are to say nothing about your own."

"Oh, I am to follow him and——"

"You are to carry out my orders, which are: First, to find out whether Jenks is a traitor. If he is, you are to see that his dispatch doesn't fall into the hands of the enemy. In that case you are to deliver your own."

"Very good, sir. What time does Jenks start?"

"In a short time," said the flag officer. "I think he said he wanted to get away about sundown, and he told me that he was going to strike south along the Cairo-Columbus road. There have been reports of some Rebel cavalry to the northward and eastward of here, and he wants to go far enough south to clear them before he leaves the river."

"With your permission," said Sears, "I'll leave at once and conceal myself at the crossroads where the first main road leaves the road for the east. It's down about where we entered that bayou last month. If he branches off anywhere it will be there."

"You will want a horse, I suppose?"

"I can get one in Cairo, and if you have the orders ready I think I'll start at once, sir."

"Here they are."

"All right, sir," answered the secretary, putting them in the pocket of his jacket. "I'll shift into riding boots in a minute."

"Will you want any money?"

"No, sir, I have plenty."

"I hope this journey will not cost you as much as the last one," laughed the old sailor.

"I shouldn't care if it did, if it brought me in touch with——"

"Now, look here, Jack, no getting mixed up with women in this affair! This is pure business, and very important."

"I realize it, sir. Good-by."

"Good-by and good luck, lad."

It was just twilight when Mr. John Sears swung into the saddle on a good horse which he had hired from the principal livery stable in Cairo, and cantered down the river road, the same over which he had galloped some six weeks before to bring rescue to the helpless gunboat off Halligan's Bluff. The Confederates were operating to the eastward, but there was no report that any of them had been seen recently on the river road. It was still light enough to see for a long distance in every direction. The country on the east side of the road was open, on the west the banks of the river fell away to the water's edge. Sears was well mounted and well armed, and he galloped along with a light heart.

No possible suspicion in the mind of the messenger

whom the flag officer believed to be a traitor could have been awakened by his movements. There was no need for him to hurry. He had a topographical instinct. He had studied the map carefully and knew the lay of the land perfectly. Just where he had landed from the gunboat, a short time before, a branch road led eastward. He remembered that the trees were thick there and he could easily find good concealment. He resolved to hide in the undergrowth and wait until Jenks came along. Afterward he would follow him and be governed in his future course as circumstances should determine.

In order to make his wait a short one he slackened the pace of his horse after getting well free of the town, and rode slowly, keeping a bright lookout by frequent backward surveys of the road he had traveled from such hills as it led over, to satisfy himself that Jenks was not in sight. If the secret service man overhauled him concealment of his purpose and plans would be impossible. Jenks had lived for days on the *Harrison* and Sears was fairly well known to him, of course.

Arriving at the crossroads just at nightfall he dismounted, and led his horse some distance from the fork of the road and tied him to a convenient tree. He fed him from the saddlebags and refreshed himself with a light luncheon, which he had brought with him from the gunboat.

Then he repaired to the side of the road and concealed himself just where the eastward road intersected the highway. The undergrowth was thick and in the dark it was impossible to see anyone. He

made himself comfortable among the bushes and waited, revolver in hand, with such patience as he could muster.

He judged that Jenks could not be far behind him. Although he had started an hour later, the messenger would have no motive to linger, and Sears expected him at any moment.

Before very long the watcher heard the hoofbeats of a horse on the dry hard road. Singularly enough, they appeared to be coming in a different direction from that he had expected. He listened attentively a moment and finally concluded that some one was riding toward the river along the eastward road. He could tell from the cadence of the horse's steps that it was proceeding slowly.

The country thereabout was more or less deserted, owing to the number of masterless men with evil intentions, who were to be found in the vicinity of every large army; men who cared little for either North or South, but who were bent on plunder and rapine. A solitary horseman on the road at that hour was not to be considered lightly.

Sears was very much annoyed at the approach of this rider. He did not care to have any interlopers blocking his plans with regard to the suspected traitor. However, there was nothing to be done but remain quiet and await developments.

The horse finally drew near and stopped at the fork of the road directly opposite him. It was so dark that Sears could not distinguish anything but the black blur of a horse and rider. He waited, wondering what would be the next move of the rider, and

was greatly surprised to observe him turn the horse and force him into the underbrush on the other side of the road.

"It's a lucky thing for me," said the young man to himself, "that he didn't turn in here. He would have ridden over me."

Having taken this position, the horse and rider remained perfectly silent. They were evidently expecting some one. It flashed into the mind of the young man that he and the rider opposite might be waiting for the same person. He had no sooner arrived at this conclusion when he heard the hoofbeats of another horse coming down the river road from Cairo at a rapid gallop. This would certainly be the messenger. Cautiously, without making a sound, he rose to his feet ready for whatever happened.

The person opposite him evidently became aware of the approaching horse at the same time, for Sears heard a slight movement as if some one had gathered up the reins and turned the horse in the underbrush. The mysterious rider was also expecting the advent of the galloping horseman, apparently.

The second horse was approaching at a rapid pace, and but a few moments elapsed before he came thundering down the road and halted with considerable abruptness at the fork.

It was too dark for Sears to ascertain whether it was the man he expected or not. He waited, confident that the horseman had not halted for nothing, and was rewarded by hearing a low whistle three times repeated from the man in the road. The whistle was answered by a musical call from the wood, a sort of trilling sound that started the watcher.

The next moment the horse in the bushes opposite came scrambling through the undergrowth and approached the rider in the road.

"Is that you, Miss Darrell?" queried an anxious voice, which Sears instantly recognized as that of the messenger.

"Miss Darrell! The other rider is a woman, then," he thought, swiftly.

He strained his ears for her reply, but she spoke so softly that he could distinguish nothing at first.

"Yes," said the messenger, in a louder voice, "I've got 'em."

Sears heard the rustle of paper as if the man had tapped his breast pocket.

"The orders are here and are very important. They're going to move down the Tennessee in a short time. The new gunboats from St. Louis will be ready and they're goin' up the Ohio. I reckon they'll be after Donelson or Henry."

"Give me the papers," said the woman, speaking more clearly now. "I will take them at once."

"Well," said the messenger, "I hadn't reckoned to give 'em up this time."

"What do you mean?"

There was something strangely familiar in the tones of her voice, yet for the life of him Sears could not place her.

"I—you see, Miss Darrell," went on the man, "the game is mighty nigh up with me. I've reason to think that the Yankee sea cap'n suspects me, and it ain't safe for me to go back any more, I reckon. So I think I'll carry this order myself."

"You must go back!" said the woman, imperiously. "You're the only means of communication by which we can arrive at the ideas and plans of the enemy."

"Well, Miss Darrell," went on the other, "I'm tired of riskin' my life for the little there's in it for me."

"You don't mean to say that you are serving your country for money!"

"'Tain't money I want," said the man, boldly.

"What is it, then? If it is anything I possess you can have it."

"If you must know, I want you."

"Me? What do you mean?" exclaimed the woman, raising her voice in her surprise and excitement.

"Come, now, you needn't git excited. And you needn't speak so loud, neither. There's no tellin' who might hear you. There's nothin' particularly strange about my wantin' you, that I kin see. You're a pretty woman, the prettiest I know."

"Silence!" cried the woman, giving a twitch to the reins of her horse.

"No, you don't!' said the man. "I've got hold of your horse and you can't git away. You've got to listen to me."

"Speak quickly, then."

"You're a mighty pretty woman, as I said. You're alone in the world since your father was shot at Belmont, and—well, I want to marry you. Come, now. My papers for a kiss and I'll risk goin' back to the Yankee boat if I have your promise you'll marry me when we've cleaned out this Yankee scum."

"You despicable villain!" exclaimed the girl. "I wouldn't marry you if you were the last man on earth! I have no doubt that if it suited you, you would sell us to the Yankees as you have sold out the Yankees to us. Let go my horse!"

She struck the horse a fierce blow with her riding whip, which hung at her wrist, as she spoke. But Jenks was a strong man and a good horseman. He held firmly the bridle of the plunging animal.

"No, you don't," he said, savagely. "Come, none of that! I'll take that kiss and—whatever else I want."

He leaned nearer to her. With a cry the woman slid to the ground and started to run. With an oath Jenks leaped from his own horse and in two bounds he had reached her.

"Help, help!" screamed the woman, at the top of her voice.

"There's nobody here," said the man, roughly—he had been drinking, apparently. "You might as well give me what I want."

"For God's sake!" cried the woman, now frantic with terror and struggling desperately in the ruffian's grasp.

"'Tain't no use," he went on, laughing harshly.

"Don't be too sure of that," said a quiet voice, out of the darkness.

Mr. Sears judged that it was high time for him to interfere. He caught the miscreant by the collar and shoved the barrel of his pistol against his face. Jenks acted with astonishing quickness. He released the girl in an instant, jerked himself about and clasped

Sears in his arms. At the same time he made violent efforts to draw his pistol.

The girl, released so suddenly, fell prostrate. The two men, struggling like demons in the dark, tripped over her feet and came heavily to the ground. Fortunately Sears was on top. His hold on the other man was loosened by the fall, however, and he was conscious instinctively that Jenks had drawn his pistol.

Before the messenger could pull the trigger Sears blew out his brains. He sprang up instantly and turned to the woman, who had also struggled to her feet.

"Who are you?" she cried, desperately frightened.

"Who I am is no matter. I overheard that dog yonder."

"Have you killed him?"

"I am sorry to say that I have. I would rather have captured him and had him hanged for a traitor. This death was too good for him. He was a spy."

"Sir," said the woman, faintly, "I don't know who you are or how you came here, but you have saved me from—from——"

"Don't say anything about it. I'm only sorry that you were associated with such a man."

"Ah, sir, the necessities of war sometimes bring us in contact with strange people."

"I am aware of that, but we can't discuss this further. What is to be done with you?"

"I——" The woman hesitated.

"Speak freely, ma'am. I have no quarrel with

you. I have no doubt you have received other messages from this man, but he's past further mischief, and we'll see that no similar opening presents itself. You may address me frankly. Trust me entirely. I mean you no harm."

"I live near here, a mile back on the road." She pointed to the eastward.

"I am going that way and will escort you to your home."

"But my horse?"

"I'm afraid you won't find your horse to-night." Taking fright during the scuffle the two horses had scampered off in the darkness. "I have a horse, however, and you can ride him. I'll lead him till you get home."

"You are very good, sir."

"Not at all," answered Sears. "To tell the truth I was so angry at that brute yonder when he tried to—to—kiss you—that I quite forgot for the moment that he was a spy. I believe I killed him as much for insulting a lady as for——"

"Are you a Southerner, sir?"

"God forbid!" answered Sears, promptly. "Why do you ask?"

"You seem so courteous and gentle to a woman."

"And do you think that courtesy and gentleness to women are monopolized by the South?"

"I—I don't know. I have never met any Northern men and——"

"Wait a moment," interrupted Sears; "time is pressing."

He bent down and, rummaging among the pockets

of the dead man's coat, he found the dispatches. Then he dragged the body into the bushes by the roadside, plunged farther into the wood and untied his horse; shortened one stirrup, threw the other over the pommel of the saddle, and when all was ready mounted the woman on the horse. Taking the bridle over his arm he started him on the road.

CHAPTER V

MR. SEARS GETS HIM A WIFE

The two went forward in silence for some time, silence which was at last broken by the woman.

"You have done me a great service to-night, sir. I should like to know your name, if you have no objection to telling me."

"My name is John Sears."

"Are you an officer in the Federal service?"

"No."

"A soldier, a sailor, then?"

"No. I am simply the private secretary of the flag officer commanding the squadron of gunboats at Cairo."

"Oh, I thought so!" exclaimed the woman, impulsively.

"Thought so? What do you mean?"

"Nothing—nothing at all."

"Your name—I heard Jenks call it—is Darrell, I believe."

"Yes."

"Are you related to the Reb—the Confederate General Darrell, who lost his life at Belmont."

"I am his daughter, sir," said the girl, sadly.

"Poor girl!" said Sears, gently.

"My father died in the defense of his country. It is a proud, although a bitter, memory."

"I understand," said the young man, as he plodded on ahead. Another silence intervened this time, broken by the young man.

"I presume that you are well acquainted with people in this vicinity?"

"I have lived here all my life."

"Do you know a young lady—she's tall and has dark hair, almost black. Her eyes are blue, strange to say, her complexion pale except when anger brings a flush to her cheeks. Her hands and feet are small, her figure is a delight. Her——"

"Why," interrupted the girl, with a suspicion of laughter in her voice, "you are quite enthusiastic over this mysterious lady."

"Do you recognize her from the description?"

"Save for the color of her eyes your words might answer for a hundred girls. Is there any other fact about her which you could give, which would enable me to identify her?"

"Her first name is Edith."

"Um!" said the girl, softly. "Yes, I do know whom you mean."

"Won't you tell me her name, where she lives, and——"

"I cannot do it."

"Why not?"

"Well, how do you come to know so much about her and yet not these important things?"

"I captured her a short time since," answered Sears, promptly, "and all I could learn about her

was that her name was Edith, and of course I remembered her appearance."

"Did you ask her what her family name was?"

"Certainly."

"Did she refuse to tell you?"

"Evidently, or I would know now."

"Then you cannot expect me to violate her confidence, can you?"

"No, I suppose not, but——"

"Really, Mr. Sears, I would do almost anything for you. You have done me a great service, and I shall never forget it, but I cannot tell you that."

"Never mind, I'll find it out some day."

They had arrived at another fork in the road. From the main road eastward a branch road led to the south.

"My way lies that way," said the girl on the horse. "And yours?"

"Straight ahead. But I cannot leave you alone. How far is your house?"

"Perhaps half a mile."

"I'll take you there."

"If I had my horse," said the girl, uncertainly, "I shouldn't mind making a dash for it."

"Unfortunately I need mine and cannot give him to you. I will see you home, however; it will take but a short time."

"You are giving yourself a great deal of trouble for me."

"Not at all. I am only doing for you what I hope any man would do."

"I didn't know that you had such men in the North."

"There are a great many things about the North that you people in the South don't know."

"There is little," said the girl, with sudden stiffness, "that we want to know."

This was so decisive and cutting a rejoinder that Sears, feeling decidedly aggrieved, led the horse along in silence. Presently the road stopped before a great gate between white pillars. It led across a grassy lawn toward a noble old house among the trees. In the windows of this mansion lights were gleaming.

"That is my home," said the girl.

"I shall see you to the door."

"It isn't necessary."

"I prefer it."

Five minutes later the horse stopped in front of a lofty portico, and Sears lifted the woman lightly to the ground. He had scarcely set her down when the porch was filled with men in butternut-colored uniforms. They came swarming through the doors and long windows and around the house as well.

Sears had no time to spring to his horse before they were upon him. He was surrounded. Resistance was useless. He stood quietly confronting the gleaming bayonets and levelled gun barrels.

"What's this?" cried a sharp voice. An officer in gray forced his way through the crowd. His glance fell on the woman first.

"Bring a light here!" he commanded.

Two or three lanterns were produced from among the men. In the light the officer faced the girl. Her back happened to be toward Sears, standing quietly by his horse. As the light illuminated the face of

Miss Darrell, the officer, recognizing that he was in the presence of a gentlewoman, took off his hat.

"I beg your pardon, miss," he began, "but will you tell me who you are?"

"I am the mistress of this plantation," she returned.

"And who is this?" The flash of the lantern fell on the face of Sears. "A Yank, for a picayune!" he exclaimed.

"Cap'n," cried a man out of the crowd, "this yere hoss he's ridin' come from Cairo, from Murphy's stable. I know the hoss an' yere's Murphy's name on the saddle blanket."

"A Yankee spy, by Heaven!" cried the captain.

"I am no spy," said Sears, coolly.

"No Southern man has a voice like that," said the captain. "We'll attend to you presently. Now, Miss——"

"That gentleman," said the girl, quickly stepping forth into the light and facing him, "is no spy."

For the first time Sears got a good look at her.

"Edith!" he exclaimed, at the same time successfully checking a start of surprise.

"John!" returned the girl, promptly, to his great astonishment. "Captain, you have made a mistake. This is no Yankee spy, although he is from New England."

"What is he, then? How comes he here?"

"He is my husband."

"Are you Miss Edith Darrell?"

"I was Miss Edith Darrell. I am now—Mrs.—John Sears."

"Will you give me your word of honor," asked the captain looking at the astonished Sears, "that you are not an officer in the Federal Army?"

"I will."

"Or in the navy?"

"I will."

"And that you are married to this lady?"

"What kind of people are you sprung from that you think a man would deny his own wife?" returned the other, adroitly dodging the question. And yet, in spite of himself, there was a ring of exultation in the voice of the prisoner.

"Fetch some of the negroes out of the house," said the captain, shortly. "Here you!" he continued, to one of the slaves of the plantation, "who is this?"

"Miss Edith, Massa Cap'n."

"And who is this?"

"I doan know nothin' 'bout him, suh."

"When did your mistress leave the plantation.

"Day befoh yistid'y, suh."

"Do you know on what errand?"

"She done tole me dat she was gwine to go to Cai'o to git mahi'd, suh," burst out a negro woman, who had been gradually edging toward her mistress. "I's huh maid, suh."

The faithful woman had heard her mistress' declaration, and her ready lie saved the situation.

"Well, this is a strange piece of business," said the Confederate captain, only half convinced. "I suppose I'll have to take your word for it. By Jove, if you're married, really married, you won't object to being tied up again."

He looked from one to the other.

"Certainly not," answered Sears, promptly.

"It is al—together—unnecessary," faltered the girl, "and I——"

"If you have been telling me the truth, Miss Darrell—forgive me, I do not know you save by that name——" interrupted the officer, quickly.

"If it would give you any satisfaction," answered the girl, resolutely struggling for composure—having entered upon the affair she realized, too late, that it must be carried through at all hazards—"I should be quite willing to marry my—my husband a second time, provided there was a minister at hand to perform the ceremony."

"It just happens that there is one here," returned the captain, with a note of triumph in his voice. "He is making his way South, having been appointed chaplain of one of Johnston's regiments and—oh, doctor! Some of you fetch Dr. Gay out here."

"Will you let me speak a word in private with my —wife?" asked Sears, moved thereto by the look of dismay which he saw on the face of the girl, in spite of her valiant effort at immobility and indifference.

"I reckon there can be no objection to that," politely said the officer, drawing back a little space and motioning his men away.

Sears stepped closer to the poor girl. He put his arm around her waist.

"Don't shrink back," he whispered; "I only do this to deceive them. It need not go any further. You have made a brave effort to save me. Say no more. Refuse this marriage."

"You saved my life, my honor," murmured the girl; "I will save you at any cost."

"Hello, Dr. Gay!" said the officer, to a venerable-looking man making his way through the soldiers, "here are two young people who wish to get married."

"Is it possible?" exclaimed the clergyman, at the same time producing a service book from his pocket. "Do I understand that you freely, of your own will, desired to be united in matrimony?"

"It's this way," said the Confederate captain. "They claim to be husband and wife. They say they were married in Cairo this afternoon. I doubt it. If they're husband and wife your marrying them again will do no harm. If they're not husband and wife I reckon they won't be willing to be married. This is a little test which I have proposed."

"Pardon me, Captain," said the clergyman, quickly, "I will not be a party to a compulsion of this kind."

"He is my husband," said the girl, suddenly, "and I wish you to satisfy this officer by marrying us again. It means nothing and——"

"Is it your wish, also?" asked Dr. Gay, turning to Sears.

"Certainly."

"Well, it is most unusual, but I really see no harm and—in short, I am ready, sir."

Surrounded by the troopers, with the Confederate captain to give away the bride, with the light of a few torches illuminating the strange scene, John Sears and Edith Darrell were thereupon made man

and wife. The Confederate captain was an amused and interested spectator of this performance. The girl's voice did not falter as she made the responses. Of the two she was the least agitated.

"Well, I reckon it's all right," said the captain, after the ceremony was completed. "I don't believe you'd marry a Yankee spy and a stranger, Miss Darrell—Mrs. Sears, I mean. Now, if you will direct your negroes to give us some supper and forage, we'll leave you and your husband to the enjoyment of your honeymoon."

Two hours later the two were alone in the great hall of the house. The last Confederate soldier had gone. They belonged to a scouting party which had been raiding the country toward Paducah and had swung around toward Cairo on their return down the river.

"Miss Darrell," said Sears, gravely, "you have done me an inestimable service."

"I could do no less," replied the girl, nervously. "You saved my honor, perhaps my life. You came here on no warlike errand, simply to care for me. Those men would have hanged you to the nearest tree if I hadn't interposed. I could not allow that."

"I don't know what to say," began the man, helplessly. "That—that—ceremony—of course——"

"You do not consider it binding? You cannot!" burst out the girl, impulsively. "It means nothing to me. I don't care to marry a Yankee, a stranger—I don't want to marry anyone. Surely——"

"I shall not force myself upon you. I know that it was a mere form. You went through with it to

save my life. There shall be no attempt on my part to—and yet——" He hesitated and finally approached nearer. "Madam," he faltered, "if I thought I could deserve your approval at last—like you I am alone in the world. I have never seen the woman who——"

"Oh, won't you go?" pleaded the girl. "Forget this whole affair. And——"

Her agony was pitiable.

"If there was only some way by which I could show——" went on Sears, desperately. "If the devotion of a lifetime could requite——"

"There is nothing, nothing, now, but to say good-by forever."

"Listen," said Sears, decisively, "there are things I must say. So far as I can tell, that was a valid marriage. I am your husband, you are—my wife in the sight of the law."

"But not in the sight of God, surely!" protested the girl.

"That's as may be. My name you know." He pulled from his pocket one of his cards and wrote a few words upon it. "I am attached to the personal staff of my uncle, who commands the Union naval forces on the river. This is the address of my bankers in Boston. I shall never force myself upon you in any way. Should you ever need me, or desire to see me; should you ever honor me by—by asking for me, you can communicate with me through these bankers, or on the flagship. I shall count it the happiest day of my life to be of service to you. Good-by, and may God bless you!"

He stood pleadingly before her. Slowly she extended her hand.

"Good-by," she whispered, "and God bless you, too. You are the enemy of my country——"

"But not your enemy," he interrupted.

Then he bent his head with old-fashioned courtesy and kissed her hand. An instant after she was alone in the hall. She sat down and buried her face in her hands. As she did so something attracted her attention. She held out her hand and looked at it. On the fourth finger of her left hand was a seal ring, which he had placed there in default of a better during the ceremony. Furiously she tore it off, lifted her hand to cast it from her, and then stopped and laid it gently down on the table by her side.

"A wife," she murmured; "married to a Yankee!"

She put her face in her hands and sobbed aloud.

Three days after, having successfully delivered the message and returned, Mr. John Sears reported to the flag officer on the *Harrison*.

"Well," said the old sailor, "did you find out about Jenks?"

"I did, sir."

"Is he a traitor?"

"He was."

"Was?"

"Yes, sir. I shot him dead at the forks of the road at the head of the bayou."

"You did!"

"Yes, sir."

"How did you find him out?"

"I heard him trying to deliver his papers to a woman."

"Oho! there was a woman in the case, then?"

"Yes, sir."

"What became of her?"

"I married her."

"What! Are you crazy?"

"I mean just what I say. I married her, or she married me."

"Well, I'll be blessed!" said the old man. "Explain yourself."

Briefly, Sears put the whole story before the flag officer.

"Well," muttered the ancient sailor, "you do have the worst luck in your adventures of anyone I know. First it was the horse, now it is a woman."

"Oh, I don't know," said his nephew, carelessly, "I'm rather fortunate in my wife, sir. Some day I hope to claim her."

CHAPTER VI

WANTED—A WIFE!

Mr. John Sears was unconscionably anxious to see his wife again. When he first talked with her in the cabin of the *Harrison,* after he had met her in Cairo, she had made a deep impression upon him. That impression had been intensified by the romantic and unusual circumstances attendant upon their marriage.

As he sat on the forward deck of the gunboat in the cool of the evening, staring down the river, he reflected that really he had seen her but three times, and that he had been in her society not more than three hours altogether! Yet he admitted to himself that he was desperately, passionately, in love with her. Nay, he gloried in that admission.

He had taken legal advice at the first opportunity, and had been assured of what he had been before convinced, that the marriage, unusual as it had been, was strictly valid and absolutely binding. Miss Edith Darrell had become his wife beyond peradventure. Whatever their future relations, there was no escaping that fact.

The young man found the situation from one point of view distinctly delightful; from another, madly

disappointing. He had not seen his wife since their marriage. That he had not enjoyed this privilege was not due to any lack of endeavor on his part. He had joined a scouting party the week after his return to the gunboat and had induced the commander thereof to visit Darrell Hall.

On that day the chatelaine of that noble establishment happened to be absent. It was most disappointing. Her negroes were there, her overseer and general factotum. None of them would, or could, tell him anything at all as to her whereabouts.

Meanwhile he had quietly made inquiries in all directions concerning her, and had learned much about her. She had devoted herself to the cause of the South, after the death of her father, with an energy and determination that amounted to consecration.

It was believed that she was the head of the Confederate secret service of the district. On several occasions carefully concealed Federal plans had been thwarted, and rumor had it that she had been the instrument which had brought about their failure.

As to her private character, all that he heard of that filled him with satisfaction and pleasure. The only daughter of an old, a wealthy and an influential family, she was as widely beloved as she was well known in that section of Kentucky.

All this, but more especially his utter inability to see her again, fanned the flame of her husband's affections. Although he had knocked about the world considerably, it had been mainly in the society of men. He was as susceptible as a sailor, and—in

short, he said to himself that he was hopelessly in love with his own wife.

Hopelessly is a good word for the situation, for where she had gone, or what she was doing, or how he was to see her again, were questions which racked his brain. All that he had to feed his hopes upon was little. He had managed to get a letter delivered to her at the plantation after he visited it with the cavalry. After much cogitation he had spoken his mind freely to her in this letter. He had told her of his family, his position and his means. He had declared to her that he loved her, and that she was the first and only woman who had ever truly engaged his affections—that as a matter of course!

He had repeated his determination to take no unfair advantage of the situation, in which her generous desire to save his life had plunged her. But he implored her to give him an opportunity, if in any way it might be arranged in the midst of war, to make himself known to her in the hope that he might thereby win her heart.

Sears was a very shrewd, even a brilliant, young man. Nothing had so engaged his attention as this letter, and it was an extremely able document. It was not without its effect upon his wife. Although, so far as he could judge, the results were most unsatisfactory; for a day or two after he received the following brief reply:

DEAR SIR: I must hold you to your promise, voluntarily given, to take no advantage of the unfortunate ceremony we went through together. I did it only to save your life and to requite your service to me. I do not know you, I cannot love you. We are divided

by everything that can separate man and woman. The ceremony may be—indeed I must admit that it is—legal enough, but I am not your wife in the sight of Heaven. I do not wish to be. I do not intend to be. There must be some way of annulling such a marriage. I shall depend upon your honor as a gentleman to assist me to this end so soon as the unhappy state of affairs in the South permits. I am not insensible of the honor you have done me, a stranger, but I cannot accept even your acquaintance, or permit the affair to go further. At the proper time I shall call upon you to have the marriage—if such it be—annulled. Meanwhile, I beg you, I implore you, to forget me.

EDITH DARRELL-SEARS.

That signature gave him some comfort. The mere possession of the letter which she had penned, which had been warm under the pressure of her hand, gave him more. And all her opposition but intensified his determination, fanned the flame of his new-caught devotion.

Nor was Mrs. Edith Darrell-Sears—to give her the name which rigid honesty compelled her to sign to the letter, to her great regret—able to put out of her thoughts, as sternly as she had tried to put out of her life, the personality of her handsome husband. There is safety in numbers, and Edith Darrell had been so widely wooed by so many men that her heart had not been engaged to anyone. She was a girl of the highest principle, clearer headed than the majority of her sex. She felt, even before she had taken advice, that she was really and truly married to Sears.

Her hatred of the North was like that of most Southern people, abstract rather than concrete. There was a certain straightforwardness about John Sears,

a decision of character, a willingness to take risks—above all, a certain masterfulness, which differed from the chivalrous and romantic devotion of her Southern friends, which attracted her strangely. A man less fine in quality, less noble in thought, might have made things very unpleasant for her after the wedding, but he had shown such entire appreciation of her deplorable situation, such absolute self-abnegation before her grief and dismay, that in spite of herself her heart had been touched.

Propinquity, they say, makes many marriages. To dwell constantly upon a relationship, even though it be a somewhat intangible one, to an absent individual, has a tendency to fill the heart as well as the mind. And she could not get away from the fact of the marriage, and the reality of her husband.

Edith Darrell was alone in the world. Here was a strong, vigorous, self-reliant man, who had in one sense every right to shield and protect her, who had treated her with a delicacy peculiar to the well-bred gentleman, and who professed to love her devotedly.

When his letter came she found herself actually blushing as she read it. The clever sentences, filled with genuine passion, effected their purpose. She caught herself staring at the address, "Mrs. John Sears, care of Miss Edith Darrell," with a new interest. "Mrs. John Sears"! It was a pleasant name, and he was worthy of any woman. A certain ring, which was concealed in her bosom, if it could have spoken, might have told a story of a somewhat uneasy, throbbing heart.

"This will never do!" she thought. "We can

never be anything to each other. I would rather die than be wife to a hated Yankee!"

She did hate him, she must hate him! They were separated absolutely, they could never be anything to each other. She nerved herself to the writing of her letter, and then gave herself up to unrestricted thoughts of him.

At first she had intended to return his ring with the letter, but since she was actually married to him a certain scruple made her keep it until the marriage could be annulled; when, of course, she would give it back. At present it was the only outward and visible sign of her status—yet she kept it hidden in her bosom!

She wondered why neither of them had thought to secure a wedding certificate. Although she repudiated the marriage, she would have felt more comfortable if she had possessed a document of that kind. It was the instinct of her sex craving protection since letters and civilization began.

Sears had some little comfort, too, in the fact that she had not sent back the ring. He devoted all the energies of his acute mind to the situation, and faced the future not altogether without hope. Both members of the strangely mated pair had plenty to do in their several vocations, which was a good thing for them.

One night a spy brought word that a Confederate steamer had come up the river and had gone into the bayou above Halligan's Bluff, for the purpose of taking the families and belongings of some of the Confederate sympathizers in the vicinity down to

Memphis. The Union advance through Kentucky had rendered the district unsafe any longer for the Southerners.

The gunboats, with the new ironclads, were over in the Tennessee ready to support Grant in his proposed movements on Forts Donelson and Henry. The flag officer was there, but Sears and the *Harrison* happened to be at Cairo when the news of the approach of the Confederate steamer was brought to headquarters. The flag officer had sent him to Cairo with dispatches, and he was waiting until the answer had been prepared. His uncle had shifted his flag to the *Bienville*, and the *Harrison* was undergoing repairs. Because of that, Darling was in command of her, with Edgerly as his second, and but a short crew aboard.

Sears heard the news at the army headquarters in the city, and immediately started for the gunboat. He told Darling about it, and suggested at once that they cut out the steamer by a boat expedition that night. There was no Union steamer, not even a tugboat, available, or they would have loaded her with men and steamed down the river and made the attempt with her. Boats it had to be. Darling, the senior—in fact, the only naval officer on the station save Edgerly—instantly acquiesced in the proposition.

Two cutters were manned and loaded with every available seaman, their carrying capacity completed by soldiers, who volunteered in great numbers so soon as they got wind of the expedition. Darling took command of one boat and Edgerly assumed charge

of the other, in which Sears had elected to go as a volunteer.

They started a short time after the word was brought. They calculated that the Confederate steamer, the *Queen of the South,* would not reach the bayou until that night. She would never have ventured so far north had it not been for the well-known absence of the squadron. It would probably take her all night and part of the next day to get her people and cargo on board. If the boats reached her by dawn they would be in time.

It was easy going down stream. The swift current greatly assisted the men at the oars, and there were enough in each boat to relieve the rowers from time to time.

The day was just dawning when they entered the bayou. As they approached the spot where the spy had indicated they would find the steamer, they halted, muffled the oars, looked to their weapons, and made the final preparations for the attack. Their plans were extremely simple. There was nothing for them to do except to make a dash for the steamer, swarm aboard of her and fight it out.

She would undoubtedly carry a detachment of soldiers as a guard, but they expected to get near her before these men realized the attack, and in the confusion they hoped to carry her out of hand. The men had brought something to eat with them, and by Darling's orders they prolonged their halt for a morning meal.

"I guess there's no doubt about getting her," said Edgerly to Sears, as they breakfasted together.

"The steamer? I guess not," said the young man.

"Oh, I don't mean the steamer," returned the midshipman, "we're sure of her. I mean the woman."

"What woman?"

"Why, didn't Mr. Darling tell you? Just before we left, the colonel commanding the district sent down word that he had learned that there was a Confederate secret service agent, a woman, aboard the steamer. That it was to fetch her mainly that the steamer had come up the river, and Mr. Darling has orders to capture her as well as the boat, at all hazards. They believe that she has dispatches for the rebel General Johnston."

"No, Mr. Darling said nothing about it to me," returned Sears, quietly, although he instantly divined that his wife was one of the objects of the expedition. "I suppose in his hurry he forgot it," he continued. "I wonder you did not mention it during the night."

"I thought you knew it," Edgerly explained.

"Well, it makes little difference to me, except that I, too, will look out for her. By the way, what's her name?"

"Darrell, I believe," answered the youngster; "she's the daughter of a general that was killed in a skirmish up the river at the beginning of the war. She lives in a big house in this vicinity."

"Your boat all ready, Mr. Edgerly?" Darling hailed from the other cutter.

"Yes, sir."

"Mr. Darling," interrupted Sears, quickly, "don't you want some one to reconnoiter? I know these parts well, and I am willing to go ashore and see

how the land lies. Set me on the bank, there, and if you don't hear from me in ten minutes you'll know that I have come to grief and you'd better heave ahead."

Sears was thinking as never before. At all hazards, he intended to save his wife from capture. Feeling ran high in Kentucky as it did in all the border States, and her lot if taken would be a hard one. Besides, it was evident that she had given up the game, for she was going down the river. He determined to save her whether or no.

Darling at once acceded to his request. Edgerly swung the boat toward the bank, and Sears immediately scrambled ashore. He waved his hand at the boat, climbed up the bank and was soon lost in the underbrush.

"We'll wait ten minutes for him," said Darling, watch in hand, to the coxswain of his boat. "Then if we don't hear from him, or see him, we must make a dash for it. It's getting late now, and we can't delay any longer."

With a heart throbbing like a boy's, Sears made his way rapidly down the bend through the underbrush. What he was to do he was not certain of. He was bound to save his wife, but how was a problem. He must be governed by circumstances, whatever they might be.

As he rounded the bend he proceeded with greater caution. The undergrowth was thick and tangled, and he could not advance rapidly. He pushed ahead, however, until he had forced his way to the edge of the bluff, where he had a good view of the steamboat not far away.

The scene was a busy one. The boat was loaded to the guards with miscellaneous heaps of household goods and other property. Apparently her cargo had reached the limit of her capacity. Yet one or two belated wagons were being driven down to the bank, and groups of people were crowding hurriedly aboard. Volumes of smoke were tumbling up from her high stacks.

She had steam up, and was all ready for instant departure so soon as the lading was completed. The captain and the mates were busily expediting matters among the negro deck hands.

Sears noticed perhaps a score of soldiers, a few of whom were on guard, most of them lounging idly about the decks, interested and amused spectators of what was going on.

Sears was greatly relieved to see the negligent watch that was kept. If he had found the Confederates suspicious and prepared for resistance he would have been compelled to retrace his steps to warn his comrades, but the situation called for no warning. The Confederates had not the slightest idea that they were menaced by attack. His conscience, therefore, left him free to effect his own purpose.

Fortune favored him, for, as he stared at the boat, uncertain as to his next move, a woman came from the cabin, crossed the gangplank, ascended the bank and stepped on the bluff overlooking the steamer. He recognized her immediately. He was near enough to hear her call to the captain and ask him how long before the boat would start, and to hear his reply

that they would cast off their lines in half an hour.

"I shall be back before then," she cried, waving her hand and turning back into the road.

With two steps Mistress Edith Sears was hidden by the trees.

CHAPTER VII

A KISS AND GOOD-BY

THANKING God for the opportunity, Sears turned and made his way through the underbrush, rapidly, almost recklessly, not caring whether he attracted attention or not—he evidently did not—until he intercepted the girl on the road.

As he burst through the bushes and confronted her she started back with a slight scream of astonishment.

"Not a word! Quick, for God's sake!" cried Sears, unceremoniously seizing her by the hand and hurrying her across the road toward the trees on the other side.

So great was her surprise that for the moment she suffered herself to be dragged helter-skelter into the wood. Sears was a powerful man, and he got her on the move before she knew what had happened. A few seconds, however, brought her to a realization of the situation, and she stopped dead.

"How dare you!" she blazed out. "I——"

"Don't stop," said Sears, imperiously, "come for your life! Believe me, trust me."

"I demand an explanation!" said the girl, her eyes flashing.

"Presently, but now you must come with me."

"Not another step!"

"I tell you you must! The steamer is to be attacked and——"

Before she knew what he was about he picked her up in his arms. He was a tall, muscular young man and she a slender woman. She screamed at the top of her voice and fought him desperately, but she was at a serious disadvantage, for he had seized her with so firm a grip, he had swept her so close to him, and he held her so tight in his excitement, that despite her eagerness to strike him in her anger, her blows had little force.

By this time the air was full of noise and tumult. From the river below came rattling crashes of musketry mingled with the shouts and yells of battle. Darling had evidently delivered his attack, and the fighting was raging furiously on the decks of the *Queen of the South*. In all that confusion her cries, shrill and terror-stricken though they were, were luckily unnoticed.

Sears knew that the steamboat would be captured in short order by the blue jackets and soldiers. He also knew that Darling, in his desire to seize the person of Miss Darrell, would immediately send parties ashore to scour the woods. And these parties would look for him also. His only hope lay in getting such a distance from the shore that the sailors would not dare venture so far. He pressed on, therefore, carrying his burden.

Even the lightest woman is a heavy load for the strongest man if he carries her in his arms. Presently it was only sheer determination that kept him going. He thought that he should be compelled to

drop her with every step, especially as she kept up her struggling, although, naturally, her resistance grew feebler.

Finally it ceased altogether. There was nothing to be gained by fighting, she found, and she remained quiet in his arms. After her first moment of wild alarm and terror her quick wit had enabled her to surmise in part, at least, the true state of affairs. The firing on the river indicated an attack. If that were true, he had come to save her.

True, he had gone about it in a rude and abrupt way, but, perhaps, the only one under the circumstances. He had always behaved as a gentleman to her, and that fact flashed quickly into her mind. She had idealized him, in fact, in her dreams, and well—there were worse places than in the arms of a brave, strong, resolute, gallant—husband!

He breathed heavily under his tremendous exertions. She could hear the throb of his heart against her own. After her struggle against him came an inevitable reaction. She was tired, helpless, in his strong arms. There was excitement, a something else she could scarcely describe, in being borne so swiftly onward by him.

At last she clung to him with a little weary feeling of languor. Never before had she been held in the arms of a man—a lover. It was not unpleasant. In his nervousness he still held her with unnecessary vigor.

Finally, as he struggled on desperately, she surprised him by saying calmly:

"You need not hold me so tight."

He was so startled that he stopped.

"Indeed," she continued, "as there is nothing the matter with me, and as you must be very tired, I think you would better put me down."

Now, it had been a fierce pleasure to Sears to take the woman he loved in that rough, berserker way, to carry her from the field will-she-nill-she. Some of the sub-dominant animal in every man thrilled in him at this exercise of his strength and power. The touch of the woman he loved against his breast had quickened his blood. Nevertheless, he felt a sense of profound relief when he put her down. The physical strain had been terrific and exhausting.

"You may release me altogether," she continued, looking down at her arm, which he still grasped firmly. "I shall not run away. Now, will you explain?"

"There is no time yet," he said. "I pledge you my word of honor that I mean you no harm. For God's sake follow me; you are not yet safe!"

There was something so tremendously earnest in his voice, so much stern purpose in his attitude, he was so superbly dominant, that she yielded gladly. He took her hand again, this time without restraint, and at the best possible speed they threaded their way among the trees and through the undergrowth.

"Oh," he said, resentful of their slow progress, "if there was only some hiding place!"

"There is," said the woman. "If you pledge me your word not to betray me I will tell you."

"I promise you," he said, at once. "Listen."

The firing had ceased. It was evident that the

fight was over. The morning was quiet and still, and back on the river bank they could hear voices. Men were apparently searching the shore. They were looking for any stray fugitives who might have escaped; they were looking for her, also for him.

"We must get in hiding quickly," he urged. "They are after us."

"This way," she said.

At last keenly alive to the state of affairs, she was now all alertness in her turn. This time she took his hand. She turned to the right, led him to the bank of the small creek babbling over sand and stone toward the river. The creek was overgrown with trees which arched over it, leaving it in deep shadow.

"You must jump over the bank and into the water," she declared, "so as not to leave any foot-prints in the sand."

She suited the action to the word, and he followed.

"Now up this way."

She plunged hastily up the stream until she came to a point where several trees had fallen over the bank. Some of them had not lost their entire root-age, for, although they lay prostrate, their smaller boughs were covered with green leaves. The girl stopped before the end of this tangled undergrowth, parted the leaves and pointed inward.

"There is a hiding place," she said.

"Shall I go first?"

"I will show you the way."

She stooped down and crawled through the open-ing. He followed immediately. The bank was rocky just there. He found himself in a recess, which

could scarcely be called a cave, and which would not have afforded concealment if it had not been for the interlacing screen of fallen trees. It was dry and clean.

His wife sat down on a prostrate log, and he, completely exhausted, threw himself upon the sandy floor. He was still pale and panting from the tremendous exertions which he had undergone. She watched him with a touch of pity in her heart. He was tired, and for her. She waited to give him time to recover himself. At last she questioned him.

"Now, will you explain?" she asked, for the third time.

"It is very simple. We learned that the *Queen of the South* was coming up the river to take the Reb—the Confederate sympathizers down to Memphis. You are suspected of being in the Confederate secret service."

"I am," interrupted the girl, proudly.

"The commander of the district gave orders for your capture. I only learned at the last moment that you were in danger. Just before the boats rounded the last bend I asked to be put ashore, ostensibly to look around, really to hunt for you. Providence was kind to us—to me—in that I saw you at the landing. The rest you know."

Sears did not know that his wife had been returning for a last look at the place where the roads forked, which had been associated with him; for there she first saw him, there he had saved her. She did not feel inclined to tell him this, however.

"If you had explained this before," she said, "it

would have been all right. But it was not necessary to pick me up in so unceremonious a manner."

"Pardon the liberty, madam," said Sears, ceremoniously, "but I could do nothing else. If you knew the situation you would have been wild to go back and warn your friends, wouldn't you?"

"Certainly."

"Well, you see, there was no other way. I had to do it. I am very sorry if I hurt you. But I will be frank with you. It was heaven to hold you in my arms."

"Hush, you must not say that! Remember, you were to take no advantage."

"Oh, ma'am, I cannot remember anything, whether you are with me or away from me, except that I love you!"

"Why do you call me 'ma'am'?" she asked curiously, avoiding any comment upon his impassioned remark.

"I cannot call you 'Miss Darrell,' for that you are not. I dare not call you 'Mrs. Sears,' for that you repudiate. I think of you as—as—'Edith,' but——"

"'Ma'am' will do as well as anything, under the circumstances," she returned, with well simulated indifference.

"Now that you are with me again, won't you let me——"

"You are taking an unfair advantage," she protested.

"I cannot help it."

"Hush!" she said, suddenly, lifting her hand and listening.

There was a noise in the undergrowth overhead and on the other side of the creek.

"I can't find them anywhere, the woman or the man, Mr. Edgerly," said the rough voice of one of the sailors standing immediately opposite them.

"Well, perhaps some of the others have found them. At any rate, we can't stay here any longer. The noise of the shooting will bring the Rebs down on us. We must get back to the boat. We've already overstayed our time. Come along, men."

The two listeners could hear the men moving away, and then all was quiet again. Yet every time Sears attempted to talk his wife motioned him to keep still. Presently she broke the silence herself.

"We are safe enough now. They have gone back."

"I suppose so," answered her husband. "What is to be done now?"

"I shall go to my house. Some of the servants are still there. To-night I shall ride South on horseback."

"Where will you go?"

"To Memphis, if I can reach there safely. I have friends there. But you?"

"Oh, I shall be all right. I can find my way afoot to Cairo."

"But how will you account for——"

"I shall say that I was captured by the Confederates and escaped. Dear lady, will you promise me one thing?"

"What is it?"

"To leave the secret service."

"I promise," returned the woman, with most unexpected readiness. "I have done all that I can, and

I am going into the hospitals of the South, where I think I shall find work much more fit for a woman than this."

"Thank God!" said Sears. "It is highly dangerous. You are known, your usefulness to your cause in greatly impaired. If you were caught, not even I could save you."

"Would you try?"

"I would die for you!"

"No more of that. Now I must go," she said, rising.

"I go with you."

"It is not necessary. It's bright daylight, I know the way."

"I will not allow you to go through these deserted woods alone," said he, looking at her sternly.

"I might not be able to save you a second time, if you were captured again." She smiled as she spoke.

"If I should die, then," he said, "it would be in your service and——"

"Hush, hush!"

"No, I don't want to die, I want to live to love you, and be loved by you, dear madam."

It was very quiet in the little recess, the sunlight filtered softly through the green leaves. He was so tall, so strong, so earnest, so manly. He reached out his hand and touched her on the shoulder. For a moment she swayed toward him. Only for a moment. Then she drew herself up and turned away.

"Come," she said, softly, extending her hand to him.

They scrambled through the opening and up the

creek. Presently she turned to the right again, and, parting the undergrowth, disclosed a path. She led the way up it, he followed after.

The path led to a byroad. They had scarcely stepped upon it when they heard the trampling of horses, the jingling of sabers.

Peering through the trees, they saw a troop of Confederate cavalry crossing the road. They were not yet observed. The woman thought quickly.

"Come," she said, "before they see us. We must run for it again."

They turned off the road and ran through the woods for some distance. There was no pursuit. Finally they halted and listened.

"We have escaped for the time being, but this is a fearful risk for you. Won't you stay here and wait until I can send you assistance? It's but a short distance to the house from here. I know the way very well. No one will molest me."

"I go with you," said the young man, resolutely.

She knew by this time that it was hopeless to argue. Again they started forward. From the edge of the clearing bordering her estate there was a plain view of the house. Between them and it ran a deep, rocky ravine. They crossed the ravine on a log which bridged it and paused on the other side.

They stared at the house across the long stretch of open grass. There were no signs of strangers. As they watched it a negro came idling out on the porch. All seemed well, yet there was no assurance as to that.

"You must come no further," she said, at last. "I am quite safe now, but there is no knowing who might be in the house, or who those cavalrymen were;

some of them may be hiding there. Remain here. I will send you food and a horse by one of the negroes. He will show you a short cut to the main road. God grant that you may reach Cairo in safety."

"Shall I not see you again?" pleaded Sears.

"It is best not."

"Won't you tell me where I may communicate with you?"

"I am going to Memphis. I shall stay with my aunt Mrs. Gaillard. But you must not write to me. It would lead to nothing."

"Oh, I beg you!" pleaded the man.

"No," said the girl, firmly; "yet again I am in your debt. You saved me once more. I thank you."

"It is nothing," returned Sears, boldly. "Who will help her if a man won't help his—wife?"

"Not that word! Good-by."

He stretched out both hands to her, although he did not come close to her. The woman flushed painfully.

"I owe you much," she said. "Will you turn away your head—close you eyes?"

Not comprehending, Sears did as she requested. A moment later two lips softly pressed his cheek. He opened his eyes instantly, but his wife had been quicker than he. She was running across the lawn toward the house. Sears watched her until she reached the portico. She had not looked back before.

Then she turned and waved her hand to him, and in a moment had entered the hall. He turned and started back across the log. He was thinking of her. Hope was reigning in his soul, love was surging through his veins. She had kissed him!

CHAPTER VIII

THE DILEMMA OF MRS. SEARS

Mr. John Sears was not careful where he stepped. The log was slippery, his feet shot from under him and he fell crashing to the bottom of the ravine.

The first thing of which he was conscious thereafter was the astonished face of a black man peering at him over the edge of the ravine. How long he had lain senseless at the bottom he had no means of determining. Indeed, at first, his ideas as to how he came to be in his present situation were vague and hazy to the last degree. Obviously, however, the first thing to be done was to get up.

He tried to raise himself on his hands, only to find that his left arm was broken. As he sank back he put his right hand to his head and discovered that it was covered with blood. The pain was exceedingly sharp. It served one good purpose, however. It helped him to recall his wits. He remembered everything presently. How he had stared after his wife as she ran toward the house, and then had carelessly lost his footing and had fallen in the ravine with the disastrous results already evident. Nothing could be more unfortunate in his present situation. What was to be done?

"Is yo' alibe, suh?" queried the negro, who had been staring at him half in terror.

"Very much so," answered Sears, weakly enough.

"I'se Miss Dah'l's boy, suh. She done sen' me down heah wid a hoss an' sumfin' foh yo' to eat, suh."

"Well, tie the horse and come down here and help me out."

"Is yo' much hurt, suh?"

"Arm broken, head cut open, badly bruised. That's all."

"'Deed, suh, dat's 'nough, suah. I'll be wid yo' toreckly."

In a few moments the negro scrambled down the bank to the side of the injured man. He was a stout, able-bodied black, and he seemed to know just what to do. He put his arm about the prostrate man and raised him to his feet. Sears had evidently lost much blood. His head whirled, he felt so faint and sick and giddy that, had he not been supported, he would have fallen to the ground again. And the pain grew more and more keen as the numbness of the shock was dissipated.

"Kin yo' walk, massa?"

"I can try."

"Wait a minute. Hab some of dis. Miss Edif done said yo' mought like hit."

Fumbling in his pocket the negro produced a flask of whisky. A draught of it put new life in the wounded man.

"I can manage now," he said. "How will we get up?"

"Ef you walk down de branch a li'l bit we'll git to de footpaf, an' I reckon I kin he'p yo' up dar."

The slow progress was an agonizing one, but at

last the ascent was accomplished. When Sears gained the top of the bank his strength had so far spent itself that he was forced to lie down on the grass. The negro contemplated him in dismay.

"I reckon I'll hab to leab yo' heah, suh," he said, at last, and, in spite of Sears' protests, he turned and ran toward the house.

The wounded man closed his eyes, and must have fainted again, for it seemed but a moment when he opened them upon the troubled face of his wife bending over him. With her were two or three negro slaves bearing an improvised stretcher.

"It's too bad," murmured Sears. "I am very sorry to trouble you any further."

"Don't say a word," returned the woman. "I'll take you up to the house at once."

"I can't go there. I must go back to Cairo immediately."

"We'll talk about that later," she said, decisively. "Come, boys."

In spite of the care of the negroes, as, by their mistress' direction, they placed him on the stretcher and bore him toward the house, his injuries hurt him terribly. His face blanched, but he clenched his teeth and made no sound. The woman saw that he was suffering intensely. The eyes of love are not to be deceived.

Of love? Yes! That clasp to the heart in the depths of the wood, that kiss on the cheek on the edge of the meadow—they had revealed her heart. She loved him. As she walked along by his side, seeing him suffer in silence, she began to realize and admit it all.

In a short time Sears was carried to the house and laid upon a couch in the library.

"Now, I shall see what's the matter with you," said the woman. "We have no doctor here, although I have sent for one, but I have learned something of medicine and surgery, especially since the war began. Where are you hurt, sir?"

She was intensely business-like and impersonal, he noted, in spite of the fact that her color came and went, her voice shook, and her heart was beating rapidly.

"My left arm is broken below the elbow. There is a cut in my head. Otherwise I am all right, except a bad shaking up."

"The cut first," said the woman.

With deft fingers she clipped the hair from the wound, washed it, applied some healing lotion, and bandaged it with clean, soft linen.

"It should be sewed up," she said, "but I am unequal to that, I fear. Now the arm."

She slit the sleeve of his coat and laid bare his arm. Fortunately it was a simple fracture.

"I shall put it in temporary splints," she continued. "I have sent one of the servants to scour the country for a doctor. He ought to be here by night. He will do all that is necessary. How do you feel now?" she asked, after she had done all that she could.

"I feel as if it were heaven," responded Sears, catching her hand and trying to raise it to his lips. "Oh, madam——"

"Don't call me by that absurd name!"

"Mrs. Sears, then."

"Nor by that; it seems so unreal."

"I will not call you Miss Darrell."

"There's nothing left but—Edith, then."

"Edith," he said, promptly, "you must leave this house at once. This is no place for you. You must follow out your plan and take horse for the southward immediately. I shall be able to mount a horse after this faintness has worn off, and I must get back to Cairo."

"You cannot travel to-day, Mr. Sears," she said, decisively.

"Why not call me John, if I call you Edith?"

"That's different. Besides, we are not discussing that. You must stay here until the doctor sees you, at least; and certainly he will not be here until late this afternoon, perhaps not then."

"Well, but you can go. Leave one of your boys to attend me and go at once. I beg you to go!"

"And leave you here alone? I should never be able to look the goddess of hospitality in the face again," she answered, playfully. "And, really, you overestimate the danger. One day more or less will make little difference. After the doctor has seen you and—then I will go."

"You will promise me that you will leave the secret service?"

"I did promise you once. I repeat it."

"And you will let me love you?"

"I don't see how I can help that if you will be so foolish," she answered, softly, quite indignant with herself for her inability to control her heart.

"And you will let me write to you, and you will give me hope?"

"Ah, Mr. Sears, I cannot promise that. Don't ask it. Our lives strangely enough seem to have become peculiarly intertwined of late. Yet there must be, there can be, no outcome from it."

"There must. There shall be!" he protested as vigorously as his enfeebled condition permitted, and, really, since he had been attended to he felt much better.

"Hush," she said, laying her hand softly on his head, and unconsciously her touch was a caress to him. "You must not excite yourself. It will not be good for you. Now, I will have some of the men take you upstairs. You must go to bed."

"But——" he remonstrated.

"No more," she continued, with half playful peremptoriness, this time laying her fingers upon his lips. "I am mistress here, and I— Oh! what is that?"

She sprang suddenly to the window overlooking the drive. "Our cavalry!" she said rapidly, with a note of terror in her voice. "They are coming here. They must not find you. Can you walk? Are you able?"

"Certainly. I am fit for anything," said Sears, struggling to his feet. "What shall I do? Where shall I go?"

The big windows of the library were draped with heavy curtains. The house was an old-fashioned one, the walls were thick. There was sufficient space in the window recesses to receive a man easily. She pointed to the nearest opening.

"There!" she said.

He started for it. She was by his side in an instant. She slipped her arm about him and assisted him across the room. Pressed for time as they were, he took advantage of the opportunity and bent and kissed her head.

"How foolish now," she cried, too busy to resent it further. The pillow which had been under his head she put upon the broad window-sill.

"I will make you as comfortable as possible. Whatever happens, don't say a word."

So soon as he had entered the recess she pulled the heavy curtains after him, effectually concealing him. She pushed a chair carelessly before them, and then, fleet as a deer, ran back to the couch and put the basin, sponge and bandages out of sight. She sat down at the table and picked up the first volume that lay upon it. Never had she been so excited in her life. The book trembled in her hands, in spite of every effort to control herself. Had anyone observed her then she would have betrayed herself infallibly. All this had been done in less than a minute, but so prompt had been her movements, that all was accomplished before the horsemen drew rein at the foot of the steps.

"Where is Miss Darrell?" cried a sharp voice outside.

"In de house, suh," answered one of the slaves, who came forward on the approach of the soldiers.

"Good!" exclaimed the voice. "Dismount, men. Come on. You, boy, show us the way to your mistress."

"Yas, suh," answered the negro, thoroughly frightened at the forbidding appearance of the soldiers.

He led the way up the steps into the hall, and finally threw open the door of the library.

"Miss Edif, ma'am. Dese gemmen wants ter see yo'," he said, cringingly.

"Gentlemen, come in," said the woman, serenely.

She was standing by the table, and her hands did not tremble now. At the crucial moment she had nerved herself to meet and dominate the crisis. She stood on guard prepared for any emergency. There was no possible doubt remaining in her mind, although she acknowledged it with a feeling of shame, that she loved the man to whom she had been so strangely married. She was prepared to save him from capture or worse, for the irregular cavalry of both armies had a very summary way of disposing of prisoners. The maternal instinct was aroused in her heart. Half of the feeling with which a wife regards her husband is maternal—thank God for it! She would do all in her power to defend him.

Even the separate causes which he and she represented faded away in the presence of his danger. She did not yet admit to herself that she would some day submit to the formal tie which bound them together, that she would be his wife in fact as well as in name. She was quite persuaded that they could never be anything more to each other than they were then. But she would not have him captured, ill as he was, and again in her service. Her manner was very composed, therefore, as she faced the situation.

There was no fear in her mind of any possible

danger to herself. These were her own people, her friends. Such parties often stopped at the Hall. It had been visited many times by partisans of both armies. To the men she loved she gave freely of her hospitality, the others took what they wished. These men wanted a meal, probably. They wanted to bait their horses, perhaps, to replace some tired or broken down animal in the troop by a fresh one from her own stable. They should have whatever they desired, she decided. She was quite willing to give up the whole place to them if she could thereby insure the safety of her husband.

It flashed into her mind as she went over the subject, that, after all, the claim upon her was not one of affection or relationship, but of hospitality. She had old-fashioned ideas, had Mrs. Edith Darrell-Sears, and the claims of a guest were sacred; especially if, as she admitted to herself, that guest were a handsome husband, passionately devoted to her, who had saved her from dire peril, and who was helpless from injuries and entirely dependent upon her.

A moment since and he had been the masterful one. Now it was she. Her heart thrilled with the consciousness of power and opportunity—the most brilliant conjunction in human lives. All of this, however, was invisible in her face. Her unceremonious visitor saw only a tall, slender, pale young woman standing quietly at a table.

"Madam," said the Confederate captain, "I am Captain Murdock, of the First Tennessee Light Horse Cavalry."

"An' p'raps you know me, ma'am," interposed a second man, thrusting himself insolently forward.

"Captain Murdock, I am glad to see you. As for you, sir, I believe you are one of the officers of that steamboat."

"I was, curse it all. We were betrayed to the Yanks. They attacked us this mornin', an' they're on board of her an' have killed an' wounded half a dozen men, includin' the cap'n. They took her up the river, an' she's in Cairo now, I reckon. I got away from 'em; leaped into the bayou and swum to shore."

Sears, from his place of concealment, exulted in the assurance that Darling had been so brilliantly successful.

"I am very sorry, indeed, to hear it," replied the woman, gravely.

"Yes," went on the man from the steamer, "it all happened jest after you left the landin'. I recollect you talkin' to the cap'n and then leavin'. Before Jim Crane—he was the cap'n of the *Queen of the South,* Cap'n Murdock—died of his wound he told me that you was the only source from which the Yanks could have got the information about the arrival of that boat, in time to come down from Cairo an' take her from us."

"What!" cried the woman, her face aflame with anger and indignation. "How dare you say that I——"

"Betrayed us? I jest do, ma'am," interrupted the man, furiously.

"Captain Murdock, I have not the honor of your

acquaintance, but you surely cannot credit so false, so foul an accusation?"

"Cap'n Murdock," said the other man, "when I met up with you a while ago I told you she'd git on her high hoss an' deny it, but look at the facts. Cap'n Crane said that nobody know'd he was comin' up here fer them people till he got here, cept'n this woman."

"Lady, damn you," said the officer, coolly.

"Lady, then," snarled the other. "The people we was to take was not to be told till we got there. I know'd it was dangerous to come so near Cairo, but we know'd the gunboats and ironclads was in the Tennessee, an' we reckoned we could do it if she kept quiet. This"—the steamboat man looked at the stern face of the captain—"this lady," he continued, "is the secret service agent for this place, an' she had to be told."

"What that man says is quite true," said the woman, calmly; "no one in the vicinity knew of the proposed trip of the boat except myself."

"Pardon me, Miss Darrell, did you tell anyone about it in time for the news to have got up to Cairo?"

"I didn't tell a soul. I made my own preparations, and when the boat arrived, her own officers sent word to the people to get ready and come aboard at once so that they could sail in the morning."

"She must have told," protested the angry mate, "an' there's somethin' else significant that makes me, an' made poor Jim Crane, too, believe she done it. She wasn't on board when the attack was made! 'Bout five minutes before they came down on us she

left the boat an' walked up the road. We never seen her again. Don't that look as if she was givin' away about the boat?"

"Umph!" said the captain. "I have no doubt that Miss Darrell can explain her absence satisfactorily. I knew her father; her family is not one to breed traitors to any cause. You give me your word of honor, ma'am, that you told no one of the proposed visit of the boat?"

"I give you my word of honor, sir."

"That it could not leak out through you?"

"Not in any way."

"Good; I believe you."

"I don't!" cried the mate.

"Keep quiet!" said Captain Murdock, curtly. "I am conducting these investigations. Now, ma'am, will you tell me how you happened to be away from the boat?"

Mrs. John Sears had no answer ready. She could, of course, say that she left the boat at that moment inadvertently and for no particular reason, but she knew instinctively that such a reply would not satisfy her questioner. Her house had not been completely dismantled, there had not been time for that, but it was perfectly well known that the things she most valued, and which she wished to take with her, were on board the steamer. On board the boat were her maid and her personal servants also.

Those left on the plantation were in the nature of caretakers, upon whose loyalty she had such sufficient dependence as to warrant her in leaving the place in their charge. There was no possible reason which she could urge for her absence which would

be convincing. If she told the truth, they would capture her husband. If she said some one had dragged her away they would not believe her. She was in a fearful dilemma.

"Come, Miss Darrell, you surely realize the importance of accounting for your movements, your absence. Why did you leave the steamer before the Yankee attack?"

"I—I just wanted to walk up the road a pace, sir. Then I heard the shooting and ran forward. I was frightened, of course, and——"

"Bosh!" exclaimed the mate. "It's all a lie."

"If you don't keep a civil tongue in your head, man," thundered the captain, "I'll have you gagged."

"Jest look at her, cap'n," persisted the man, recklessly. "People like her don't take the lie ca'mly. She's makin' no objection to it. Does she look like a woman what's tellin' the truth?"

"Miss Darrell," began the captain—much as he despised the harsh, brutal tone of the mate, he could not fail to be impressed by the man's shrewd comments—"I grieve, indeed, to say it, but the circumstances are at least suspicious. I beg you to be frank with me. Why did you leave the boat when you did? Where did you go?"

The girl looked at the officer and bit her lips to keep the tears back.

"You must tell me, madam," continued the captain, but more coldly, "for unless you can give me a satisfactory account of your absence, I shall be compelled to credit this man's charges and hold you a prisoner. Why did you go?"

"I cannot tell you," faltered the woman.

CHAPTER IX

ACKNOWLEDGED AND DISAVOWED

"I CAN," said a quiet voice from the corner of the room. The curtains parted, and John Sears stepped unsteadily from the window recess.

"Why did you do it?" cried his wife, desperately.

She hesitated, then ran to his side. Again she assisted him forward. Captain Murdock was a gentleman. He recognized first that the strange visitor was ill, wounded. He thrust forward one of the chairs, and Edith helped her husband into it. Then she stood defiantly by his side, resting her hand on his shoulder.

"Now, sir," began the Confederate captain, politely, "perhaps you will be good enough to tell us who you are and what you know about this matter."

"My name is John Sears. I am attached to the personal staff of the flag officer commanding the United States forces on the river."

"Do you hold a commission in the Federal navy, sir?"

"I do not. I am merely a private secretary."

"Ah, a non-combatant, then?"

"Not exactly."

"Humph! Proceed with your story."

"*I* can," said a quiet voice from the corner of the room.
Page 260.

"This lady"—Sears glanced at the woman who stood so resolutely by his side—"is my wife."

"Miss Darrell!" exclaimed the officer.

"Mrs. Sears, if you please. We were married on this very porch some six weeks ago."

"Madam," said Captain Murdock, "can this be true."

"It is true."

"I reckon it is, Cap'n," interrupted the mate, "one of her black wimmin told some of my men about it. It seems this Yank was escortin' her home one night, havin' saved her from some peril or other, when they was surrounded by a pack of guerrillas, an' to save him, she claimed to be his wife. That's all I know. Don't ye see how it fits in the story? She notifies him up in Cairo that the boat is comin' down here, an' he comes down to take the steamer an' to git her."

"What have you to say to that?" asked Murdock.

"In the first place," began Sears, "this lady is my lawful wife. That man yonder has only half the story. Mrs. Sears"—this was the first time the title had been bestowed upon her in public, and her face flushed at the sound of it, yet not with shame or anger. "Mrs. Sears—Miss Darrell that was—saved my life, in requital of some slight service I had rendered her, by declaring herself my wife. The Confederate officer who commanded the detachment on the night in question wasn't satisfied with her statement. There happened to be a stray minister with him going south to join his regiment, and to make certain, the captain had him marry us then and there. This lady, therefore, is my lawful wife."

"Is this true?"

"It is true," answered the young woman bravely. "You can question the negroes if you desire further evidence than my word."

"That is sufficient, madam. Now, as to the charge of betrayal."

"I give you my word of honor, sir," said Sears, firmly, "that Mrs. Sears did not betray your plans. We were informed of the arrival of the steamer by a man, a spy, in our service."

"What was his name?"

"I cannot give you that, and if I could I would not. As you know, it is one of the cardinal principles of warfare that, at all hazards, a man must protect his own agents among the enemy. Suffice it to say, that I repeat my pledge that in no way did the information come from this lady."

"But her absence from the boat? Your presence here?"

"That also can be explained. One of the objects of the expedition was to secure the person of this lady, who had been represented to us as being the head of the Confederate secret service in this vicinity. I went along with the party as a volunteer. I didn't know until ten minutes before the attack that any particular design to seize her was in contemplation. So soon as I learned this I got ashore, under the pretense of reconnoitering, and in the hope of saving her from capture."

"Saving your enemy?"

"Saving my wife, sir. Would you do less? I knew, in the present state of feeling in Kentucky,

that she would be dealt hardly with if she were captured. I hoped in some way to get her away from the boat. Providence was kind to me. I saw her walk up the road. Of her own motion——"

"I was going to take a last look at the crossroad," interrupted the woman, bravely. "It is associated in my mind with incidents I shall never forget."

It was there Sears had met her and rescued her. His heart leaped at this admission. He smiled gratefully up at her.

"I followed her, caught her and dragged her away from the vicinity of the steamer," he continued.

"A likely story," sneered the mate.

"Proceed, sir," went on the captain, unmoved by this comment.

"She struggled. Finally I was forced to carry her away. She screamed and fought back as well as she could."

"Your wife fought you, sir?"

"I am sorry to say that I did," whispered the woman, almost inaudibly.

"Her cries were unnoticed in the tumult consequent upon the boat attack. Having carried her away, I felt responsible for her safety. I knew that my comrades were scouring the woods for me, and we hid in a ravine. When they gave over the search I brought her here."

"But your injuries?"

"Were caused by a foolish and careless misstep on my part in crossing the ravine on the edge of the wood. That is the whole solemn truth, so help me God!"

"I also join my attestation to his," said his wife.

"Have you a marriage certificate, ma'am?" asked Murdock.

"No. I never got any," faltered the woman.

"And you have no evidence to offer except the statement you have made?"

"None."

"Well," continued the captain, reflectively, "it is a strange story. I am disposed to believe it. Yet I feel it my duty to hold you both. Are you able to mount a horse, sir?"

"I am able to go anywhere that you take my wife," said Sears, firmly.

"Oh, sir," cried the woman, "he is suffering from loss of blood, his arm is broken. It is only temporarily attended to. The doctor is coming. Leave us here under whatever guard you please. I pledge you my word of honor that I won't try to escape."

"You're goin' to let them fool you, pull the wool over your eyes, too?" said the mate.

"Silence!" roared the captain. Then, glad of some object upon which to vent his feelings, he balled his fist toward the man. As he did this there was a roar from the men outside. A rifle shot crackled suddenly from the drive. It was followed by a terrific fusillade, in which could be heard shouts and screams and curses.

"An attack!" cried the captain, turning instantly and running to the porch, upon which he had no sooner set foot than he was shot down. The woman started to follow, but Sears clasped her around the waist.

"Remain where you are. Absolutely quiet. Claim

no relationship with me now. Your safety depends upon it."

In the excitement she did not realize what he was saying or what his words meant.

The next moment through the windows burst the Federal troops. The Confederates had been surprised by a battalion that outnumbered them three to one. Those who had not been killed or captured had instantly fled. Coming out of the bright light into the semi-darkness of the room, the Federal officer did not at first recognize Sears. Although he had risen to his feet, his wife had instinctively stepped in front of him as if to shield him.

"Are you Miss Edith Darrell?" began the officer.

"I—was—I—yes."

"Good. You are my prisoner. I was sent down here to arrest you."

"Of what am I accused?"

"Of being the head of the Confederate secret service. Hello, Sears! What in blazes are you doing here?" he broke forth, as he recognized Sears.

"Those fellows you have just routed," said Sears, quietly, "made me prisoner, Major."

"But I thought you were with the boat party?"

"I was. I landed to reconnoiter, and, falling into a ravine, was knocked senseless and captured, after the boat had been taken by our men. They brought me here, and were questioning me when you came up."

"After the boats left, the colonel sent us down here to coöperate, and perhaps get this woman, if you missed her. Do you know anything of her?"

"Nothing," replied Sears, with an elaborate as-

sumption of great indifference. "That is, I only know what you know, and what I have heard about her."

His wife flashed one appalled and indignant glance at him at this open repudiation of her. What did it mean? Was he false?

"Can you ride a horse, do you think?" asked the officer.

"Certainly I can, and glad of the chance."

"Madam, if you have any preparations to make you would better make them at once, for you will have to ride with us to Cairo. I'll see about getting you a horse, Sears. Out of here, now, all of you! We have orders not to loot this place."

He turned to his men, and in a moment the room was empty.

"I," said the woman bitterly, drawing herself up and facing her husband with contempt writ large in every line of her figure, "acknowledged you before my friends. Why did you, in my moment of peril, repudiate me? I shall not forget it."

Before Sears could say a word, she swept through the door into the hall. He did not attempt to communicate with her during the painful ride back to Cairo, in which he required all his strength and fortitude. He was received with open arms by his friends and comrades as one from the dead, while his wife was lodged in the common jail.

CHAPTER X

MRS. SEARS IS GRATEFUL

Five weeks had elapsed since Mrs. John Sears had been captured on her own plantation and lodged in prison at Cairo. She was still held as a suspicious person. She was believed to be the head of the Confederate secret service in the vicinity, but it was difficult to procure evidence sufficient to convict her of any overt act, although the suspicions were as widespread as they were well founded. The district was under martial law and her case depended upon the pleasure of the military commandant, who had referred the whole matter to Washington.

Meanwhile, through Sears' efforts, she was made as comfortable as possible. The influence which her husband had been able to exert, although he had been confined to his bed with a severe illness at first as the result of his broken arm and the hardships of the journey to Cairo, had conduced to some mitigation of the rigor of her confinement. She had been allowed a private room. By his direction her meals had been sent her from the best hotel in the place, for which, of course, he was very glad to pay. He had also employed counsel for her, and the attorney who represented her had moved heaven and earth to secure her immediate trial or release on bail, yet in vain.

Sears himself had carefully refrained from identifying himself with her in any possible way. Not because he was ashamed of her, or of the connection between them, or because he intended to repudiate her—on the contrary. He would have given all he possessed to have publicly claimed her as his wife and to have stood openly and boldly by her in her trouble. But for her sake he felt that it would be unwise to do this. He scrupulously concealed even his interest in her, and everything that he did for her was done through his agents. She herself knew nothing of his actions and never even suspected that her outside friend was her husband. His disavowal of her had been so prompt, his renunciation of her so unequivocal, his silence so absolute, that in her bitter disappointment she never even dreamed that he of all others was concerned in her welfare or that he was looking out for her future.

Sears believed rumor did her no wrong, that she was entirely guilty of having secured the information about the Federal plans and turned it over to the Confederates. In all probability she had been one of the most important secret service agents in western Kentucky. He had no doubt that if she were tried before the military commandant she would be found guilty and sentenced to imprisonment during the war, which every one realized now would be a long one, in some Northern prison. Nevertheless, she was his wife, and although he was heart and soul for the Union, he intended to effect her escape if he could.

He judged, and rightly, that in any attempt at her

enlargement, he would stand a much better chance of success provided no one knew that he was at all interested in her welfare. He was afraid even to trust her with his designs lest she should inadvertently betray him. The delay in bringing her to trial suited him admirably. It gave him time to get well, to reflect upon the situation and to mature his plans. He had fretted terribly during the first week of his confinement, but he had soon realized that his return to health depended largely upon his mental condition and he had resolutely set himself to get better. If the worst came and she were found guilty before he could secure her freedom, he intended to declare the marriage and use his personal influence with the authorities, which was great, to have her paroled in his keeping. During his convalescence he racked his brain to think up some practicable scheme whereby he could get her out of prison and down the river to her friends.

In the interim Forts Donelson and Henry had fallen and the flag officer had returned to Cairo with the ironclads. Some of them had been so severely damaged during the engagement with the forts that they required extensive repairs to fit them for service. When his fleet was in readiness again the flag officer intended to inaugurate a vigorous campaign with Island No. 9, which the Confederates had fortified very heavily, as the next objective.

So soon as the *Bienville,* the flagship, tied up at the wharf at Cairo, Sears went aboard of her. His arm was now perfectly well and although he himself was a little unsteady from his long siege, he was prac-

tically as fit for any undertaking as he had ever been in his life. He detailed his adventures—such of them as he could tell, that is—to his uncle, but did not in any way allude to the fact that the Edith Darrell who was held in confinement in the city, was the woman he had married. Ultimately, of course, he intended to tell the flag officer everything, but the time had not yet arrived for that disclosure. And his uncle somewhat disturbed his plans by informing him of a prospective commission for another dangerous duty.

The jail in Cairo and several large warehouses adjoining had been fitted up as military prisons and were filled with a great multitude of prisoners. It happened on the afternoon of the day the *Bienville* arrived that some drunken soldiers carelessly set fire to the building in which Edith Sears was confined. Sears had been prowling about the vicinity of the jail at the time, as he had often done of late, trying to devise some means by which he could get in himself or get his wife out. The building was an old one and it burned rapidly. The fire spread in every direction and the provost guards, whose duty it was to watch the prisoners, were of necessity compelled to fight the flames for their very lives.

Sears had procured a plan of the jail. He had studied it until he could find any place in it in the dark if he could get an opportunity. Here was that opportunity. He forced his way into the burning building using his official position as the flag officer's secretary freely as a passport, wherever he met any objection. The place was full of smoke and crowded

with frantic prisoners who were clamoring for instant release in fear of being burned to death in the conflagration now raging furiously.

The commandant of the prison, a humane man, realized that it would soon be necessary for him to release his prisoners although he was reluctant to do so until a sufficient guard could be assembled to keep them from breaking away entirely. Messengers had been despatched to the military camp overlooking the city and it was hoped a regiment of soldiers would arrive in time to receive the captives.

Sears forced his way through the excited and clamorous throng and ran down a deserted corridor until he reached the door of the private room in which his wife was confined. This room was one of a suite of apartments occupied in peaceful times by the jailer and his family, and now used as the offices of the provost marshal of the prison. This room opened not only on the main prison on one side, but upon the dwelling-house, so to speak, on the other. Sears knocked on the door. There was no reply. He knocked again and then not daring to wait longer threw himself violently against the door and smashed it open. It was strong enough to retain a woman, but not having been designed for a prison, it was no barrier for a vigorous man.

As he broke into the room he saw his wife standing by the window apparently very much frightened. The yard outside was filled with smoke. She could see the flames bursting from the adjacent buildings and she knew the jail was doomed. She also recollected that the jail was full of very disreputable men.

She feared for her safety should the Federal authorities lose control of them in the confusion. The hall beyond was filled with shouts and screams and yells appalling to listen to. Her relief when she saw her husband was instant and apparent, for the moment, that is. Then, as he dashed toward her, eagerly calling her by name, she drew herself from his touch with a gesture of hatred and loathing as if he carried contamination with him.

"My dear wife——" he began hurriedly.

"Don't speak to me! I hate you! I despise you! I'd rather die——"

"Nonsense!" returned her husband, brusquely. "We'll discuss that later. At present you are in imminent peril of your life. I am here to save you. Come."

"I won't go with you!"

"You said that once before," said Sears coolly. "And I carried you. Be reasonable. Whatever you think of me," he went on quickly, "this jail is doomed. If you stay here you will be burned to death. If I can be the instrument of procuring your freedom, your safety, why should you object? There is nothing personal about it. Come!"

He concluded and rightly that his blunt forceful presentation of the case was sufficient for her common sense. He turned and she followed him, rebellious still and saying nothing.

"Where does that door lead to?" he asked.

"I don't know."

"I think it gives entrance to the home of the jailer, used now for offices. There is an exit to the street from it. We'll try it."

He picked up a heavy chair, swung it lightly to and fro and battered on the door. It was a strong door, but he splintered the panels and finally broke it open. By this time the room was full of smoke. His wife watched him with an eager joy, in spite of herself, in the splendid strength he manifested. By the time he had finished the atmosphere of the room was dense and breathing was growing difficult.

"Come," he said, taking her hand.

He did not judge her harshly in his heart because she had emptied the vials of her wrath and contempt upon his head. He understood exactly. He could disarm her later on. At present he had only to save her. Meanwhile the open door into the corridor had attracted the attention of some of the prisoners. They swarmed into the room from the hall, and so soon as they saw the other opening into the offices they rushed for it. They were inspired equally by terror of the fire and by a desire for liberty. Either was a sufficient incentive to quicken them almost to frenzy.

In the twinkling of an eye Sears and his wife were surrounded by a jostling, pushing, frenzied mob. Sears kept his head and his feet. He threw his left arm around the slender waist of his wife and fighting away the crowding men with his other hand, he half carried, half dragged, her along the passage. There were one or two soldiers on guard in the offices. They attempted for a moment to restrain the crowd, but they were pushed aside without hesitation by the excited men. In a very short space of time Sears found himself on the street.

He had studied the approaches to the jail as well as the jail itself. He knew exactly the quickest and safest way to escape from the vicinity. Saying not a word to his companion he plunged with her into the midst of a crowd of spectators who had run to the scene of the fire from all quarters, and was instantly lost to general observation. He succeeded in getting his wife away from the neighborhood of the jail before the soldiers appeared. He had escaped in the nick of time, for the troops arrived immediately after, and many of the flying prisoners were promptly rounded up and marched to a place of safety. He hurried his wife along the more or less deserted streets until he felt he had put a good distance between her and any possible immediate pursuit.

Through her lawyer he had caused his wife to be amply supplied with money, which she had gratefully accepted believing it came from some Southern sympathizer. She had been enabled therefore to procure appropriate clothing for the winter weather. In her sudden dash for liberty, however, she had taken neither coat nor hat. Observing the curious glances cast at her, Sears piloted her into the first drygoods store they came across. He was thinking hard and quickly as to what he would better do with her. He had as yet made no plans as to his course if he should succeed in getting her out of jail, and he was now in something of a dilemma.

"Why," she said to him, as he gently urged her into the store, "do we come in here?"

"You are attracting attention," he said gravely,

"because you have neither coat nor hat on and I want to get you something which will serve temporarily in here. We have farther to go to-night."

This evidence of thoughtfulness greatly touched the woman. She entered the shop and easily found something suitable, at least for the time being, and with a feeling of intense satisfaction Sears paid the bill. Nothing that had happened gave him so much of a sense of proprietorship in her as this simple act. When she was completely equipped they went out into the street again. From what he knew of the military commandant Sears realized that every possible avenue of escape would instantly be covered with heavy guards in view of the number of prisoners which the fire had caused to be turned loose in the streets. That he could get her out of Cairo by any of the highways or byways without a pass was highly improbable. What should he do with her? They walked along the street in silence which was finally broken by his wife.

"Well, sir," she began, having observed him closely the while, "where am I to go now? What are you going to do with me?"

This instinctive deference to his judgment, this dependence upon his decision, further pleased him.

"The boldest course," he answered, "is the safest. I shall take you to the *Bienville*."

"You mean——"

"I mean my uncle's flagship."

"And what will you say there?"

"I will say that I want to introduce him to my wife. He knows about my marriage. The flagship

reached here this evening and I shall say you came to the city to-night. Afterward, well, I shall know what to do."

"But," began the woman bewildered as they walked down the street toward the river, talking quietly, "you—you repudiated me at my home. I have been hating you ever since I was captured. I heard nothing from you. In my hour of extremity everybody deserted me."

"My dear wife," and there was both avowal and caress in his voice, "do you think so meanly of me. In the first place, I was ill——"

"I know," interrupted his wife, "are you better now?"

"Perfectly well."

Unconsciously, almost, as she put this question to him, she had slipped her arm in his and, behold! they walked along in the growing darkness as any other husband and wife might have done.

"I knew you were guilty of the charges against you," he continued.

She nodded her head gravely.

"I divined instantly what course would be pursued in your case. I determined, so soon as I was able to get about again, to effect your escape. I believed that if no one knew of any possible relationship between us I would be very much more free to do this, and could make the attempt with much better prospects of success. It would be fatal to you for me to try it, if it were known we were husband and wife. My dearest wife," he went on boldly, "to claim you before the whole world is the one thing desirable for

me. I will be the happiest man on earth when I can do so, but——"

"Do not talk that way," protested his wife. "Remember what you said. What you promised."

"I remember, but it is useless, absolutely, for us to pretend any longer. Think what we have gone through together, what you have done for me——"

"And you for me——"

"That was nothing. But we cannot be indifferent to each other."

"I am not indifferent to you."

"That's not enough," protested Sears. "I want you to love me as I love you."

"You are a Northern man, an enemy. I cannot! I cannot!"

"We won't talk about that now," said her husband, "but about your escape."

"Suppose you had not been able to get me out of jail?" she asked him.

"At the very last moment I should have declared myself your husband and have appealed to the Secretary of War to parole you in my custody for the balance of the war—forever!"

"The audacity of such a thing!"

"Would you prefer a military prison until this war is over—and believe me the end will be a long time coming—to such a parole—with me?"

"Certainly I would," answered the woman desperately, striving to convince herself there could be no other end to this strange love affair than separation. Her reply, the deceitfulness of which he could not fathom, cut him deeply.

"Nevertheless," he replied quietly, after a little space, "I should have tried to save you from that fate in spite of yourself. You do not know what such confinement would have been to you."

His gentle forbearance touched her greatly. If the walk had been prolonged she might have manifested her gratitude in some way that would have been agreeable to him, which would have taken some of the sting out of her words and actions, but they just then turned in toward the wharf where the *Bienville* lay.

"There," said her husband, "is the ship. You must back me up in whatever I may say. You will be safe enough here for the night. My stateroom will be at your disposal. I shall see what can be done to effect your escape in the morning."

"Your stateroom!—I may trust you—absolutely?" faltered the woman, frightened at his words.

"My dear wife," said the young man very gravely, "you shall be as sacred to me as my mother, as my sister, would be, if I were blessed with either."

"Thank you," returned his wife, greatly relieved. "I believe in you. I wronged you cruelly when I doubted you. But there came no word from you and——"

She stopped short, drew away from him and stared at him as he faced her. A sudden idea came to her.

"Did you send me that money?" she asked.

He said nothing, but in her growing illumination it was not necessary to answer the question.

"Did you give me that room? Did you send me

those meals? Did you provide for that lawyer?" she went on hastily, the color flaming in her face.

"Well, I—yes," he said nervously, "you see, you were my wife, and——"

"Oh, Mr. Sears!" cried the girl, overwhelmed with a sense of how she had indeed wronged him in her heart. She put her face in her hands and sobbed aloud.

"There, there," he said very tenderly, laying his hand on her and slipping his arm around her—it was sweet for her to rest against his shoulder—"don't. You must not. I want you to dry your eyes. We must get aboard the flagship at once. I want my uncle to see how worthily I have chosen."

CHAPTER XI

DOWN THE RIVER

The sentry at the gangway of the *Bienville* was very much surprised when the flag officer's secretary came on board accompanied by a veiled lady whom he at once escorted to his uncle's cabin. The flag officer himself was even more astonished when he looked up from his writing and saw a woman standing by Sears' side. He rose to his feet instantly, however, after one quick glance and bowed profoundly.

"Uncle," said his nephew coming forward, "allow me to present you to Mrs. Sears."

The flag officer was thunderstruck. He stared at the young man in growing astonishment. He had forgotten, for the time being, his nephew's marriage and the realization came to him with a sense of sudden shock. The flag officer was not easily daunted by any situation in which he found himself and he presently recovered his equipoise. Like all sailors, particularly old ones, he was singularly susceptible to feminine influences. It is the penalty the wayfarers of the sea pay for their long periods of isolation. The first glance had told him that the girl was beautiful. As his nephew's sole remaining relative he was glad, since Sears had married so unceremo-

niously, to recognize that his enforced choice had been a good one. A second glance disclosed the fact that the woman was in trouble. Mrs. Sears was one of the few women who look pretty even in tears, and there was a suspicious moisture about her eyelids that completely won the old man's heart.

"My dear madam," he said, "I beg to extend to you a belated but no less genuine welcome into our family. Jack, you rascal, why didn't you tell me—forgive an old sailor's frankness, ma'am—how charming your wife was? My dear, permit me."

He stepped nearer to her and took her by the hand.

"I am old enough to be your father," he said kindly, and then bent and kissed her forehead.

"Oh, sir," exclaimed the poor girl quite touched, "you are too good to me."

She had been so tried that she burst into tears again. Sears yearned to take her into his arms, but the circumstances were such that he had to stand awkwardly by while the flag officer comforted her.

"It is most foolish of me," sobbed the woman, "to give way so, but I am in such trouble."

"Mrs. Sears only came to the city this afternoon," interrupted Sears, quickly, in answer to his uncle's questioning look. "Every room in the hotel was occupied as it has been for weeks past. She did not know where to turn and in her confusion was robbed of her purse. By a lucky chance I met her in the street and brought her here."

"Quite right, my boy, quite right," said the flag officer, swallowing this astonishing mendacity without hesitation. "Why didn't you come here first, my dear young lady?"

"Well, you see, sir," said the woman, "that marriage——"

Again Sears came to the rescue.

"You know, uncle, that it was merely a ruse to save my life and while it was a legal marriage I have learned, I have never attempted to take advantage of it and never shall. I brought Mrs.—the young lady here because I considered it the safest place for her. Since the jail has been burned down the whole town is in a state of terrific confusion and I don't like to think of any woman alone and helpless under the circumstances. If you can take care of her to-night, to-morrow she can look up her people and see what's to be done."

"It's sailor fare only, madam, that I can offer you," said the flag officer, "but I shall see that you are as safe as in your own home."

"Thank you very much, indeed, sir."

"That message you wanted me to take down the river to-night?" said Sears.

"We'll talk of that later," said his uncle, "meanwhile call the steward and have him serve supper here. I will give you a spare stateroom on the other side, all for your own, ma'am. Perhaps you would like to go in there now and refresh yourself before we have supper."

"I should like it very much, sir," said the girl gratefully, retiring in the direction the old man indicated.

"Now, uncle," began Sears, who had thought out a plan in the meantime, "you said something about an important dispatch you wanted carried down the river to-night."

"I did. Our forces are opposite Island No. 9. This dispatch details our plans against that point and invites the coöperation of the army. I want to get it into the hands of General Bransfield as soon as possible."

"I'll take it, of course. My best plan, you think, would be——"

"To go down the river. I can lend you a steam launch which will land you just above the island and then you must get along as best you can. You ought to come across Bransfield about ten miles below the island on the eastern shore."

"Thank you," answered Sears promptly, "but I believe I know a better way. The town is full of Confederate spies and the departure of a steam launch would be noticed. If I landed anywhere near Island No. 9 I should be gobbled up. I will take a skiff as soon as it gets dark and will slip away from the shore and drift down the river until near the island. Then I will run the boat ashore in some creek or bayou in the morning and wait until the next night. Then I will start out again and I have no doubt I shall be able to pass the island undiscovered."

"Perhaps that will be a better way," returned the flag officer, thoughtfully. "At any rate, you have been so successful in the other commissions which I have entrusted to you, that I am inclined to leave matters entirely in your hands. By the way, I had a letter from the Secretary of the Navy yesterday in which he offers me a commission for you in view of your brilliant services. Will you take it?"

"I will let you know when I get back."

"Very good. Now don't get mixed up with any more women this time."

"It strikes me that women have been my salvation, sir," answered Sears, smiling.

"Whether that's so or not you certainly were very lucky when you married that girl. By the way, what about her?"

"I shall leave her in your charge, Uncle John," returned the young man. "In the morning she can communicate with her friends and it will be all right, I am sure."

"Jack, if you don't win that woman's heart and make that marriage a real one, I'll repudiate you!"

"I shall do my best, sir," returned his nephew, earnestly.

After supper the flag officer left the two young people alone in the cabin for a few moments. Sears took instant advantage of the opportunity.

"I am going down the river to-night on a secret mission. You must go with me. It is your only chance. I shall bring a boat under your cabin window exactly at ten o'clock. You will know when that is by the bell forward. It will strike four times. Do you understand?"

"Yes."

"You must crawl out of the window. I will receive you and you must leave the rest to me."

"You are taking a great deal of trouble for me," said his wife. "I do not wish to be ungrateful, but if it is in the hope——"

"It is in the hope of nothing but of securing your

freedom. I do not wish to do anything to make you unhappy."

"Yet you load me with obligations."

"Does that make you unhappy?"

"Yes, because I cannot repay."

He looked at her with a glance that said plainly, "there is a way," although he spoke no word.

"One thing more," he resumed. "We will probably be two nights and two days in the skiff. It is very embarrassing but it would be very much better —you could more easily escape detection if you wore ——" he stopped and blushed furiously.

"Do you wish me to put on man's clothing?"

"If you can bring yourself to do so."

"I will do anything you tell me. Anything to further my escape, that is."

"Very good. I will see that a uniform——"

"Must it be a Federal uniform?"

"I can get you nothing else."

"Oh, very well," answered the young woman, resignedly.

"I will see that it is put in your stateroom in plenty of time for you to change."

Mrs. Sears excused herself to the flag officer very early that night on the plea of excessive fatigue after the exciting events of the day. Sears made occasion to go forward and get a new uniform from a young blue-jacket who was about the size of his wife. This he succeeded in smuggling to her stateroom unobserved. He and the flag officer sat talking over the prospective adventure until nine o'clock. At Sears' suggestion he had memorized the despatch which had

been weighted with lead so that it could be dropped overboard if he were captured. If he got through with his life he could repeat it verbatim.

"Do you wish any assistance? Is there anything further I can do for you?"

"Nothing, sir."

"Do you know where to get a boat?"

"Yes, sir."

"Good-bye, then, and God bless you."

"Thank you, sir."

"I shall take good care of your charming wife, while you are gone."

"I am sure of that," said his nephew, with just a suspicion of a smile lurking about his mouth.

As four bells struck on the *Bienville* a small skiff cautiously approached the side of the ironclad just below the port which opened from the stateroom in which Mrs. Sears was supposed to be sleeping soundly. The night was pitch dark, a slight rain was falling and Sears brought the boat alongside so deftly that not a soul aboard the ironclad suspected him. So far, so good. He waited in agonized suspense. Presently a head thrust itself cautiously over the port sill, a soft voice whispered:

"Mr. Sears!"

"I am here."

"What shall I do?"

"Turn around. Sit down on the sill, swing your feet outboard and trust to me."

It was a feat of some difficulty to catch the young woman but he succeeded in achieving it without capsizing the boat. Guided by him she slipped gently

to the bottom of the skiff. Quickly he cast off the painter, a turn of which he had taken around a convenient ring bolt, and in another moment the boat was lost in the blackness of the river.

"Don't say a word," he whispered to the woman crouching at his feet, glad for the shelter of darkness in her strange attire, "until I tell you."

Cautiously he moved forward, broke out the oars when they drifted far enough away from the ironclad, and his vigorous arms, aided by the strong current, sent the little skiff flying down the river.

"Now you may talk," he said at last.

"I hated to deceive your uncle," she began at once, "he was so kind. I left a note pinned to my pillow begging his forgiveness."

"That was very thoughtful, but we have a long journey before us and you must go to sleep."

"To sleep?"

"Yes," replied her husband, "there are blankets on board."

"You got them for me. How thoughtful you are! How can I ever thank you?"

"By lying down and going to sleep. I will awaken you in the morning."

She spread the blankets out, propped her head on a pillow which he had also brought, and lay down in the stern sheets with her feet toward him where he sat in the thwart. She covered herself with the other blanket and over all he drew a heavy rubber poncho. In a few moments, such had been the fatigues of the day, she was sound asleep. Day was breaking when she awoke and rose on her elbow. She stared at him a moment in bewilderment.

"Where are we?" she asked. "Oh, now I know," she continued, sitting up and looking over the side.

"Perhaps you can help me now," he asked.

"I shall be very glad to do so."

"Is there a little creek or bayou near here where we can conceal ourselves during the day?"

"There should be such a one just below Halligan's Bluff."

"Good! We'll go in there. But stop! Why shouldn't I put you ashore at Island No. 9? I never thought of that. There are sure to be Confederate steamers there and you can easily get down the river from there without difficulty. That will be just the thing."

Strange to say the woman experienced no especial elation at the thought of this sudden parting.

"I suppose so," she said, half reluctantly.

"I will land you at the island immediately," continued Sears, not noticing her hesitation.

"But you will be captured if you do," she protested.

"I think not," answered the young man, "at least, I won't, if I can depend upon you."

"On me?"

"Certainly. I presume you are known to some one on the island?"

"Everybody," answered the girl proudly, "knows me in this part of the country."

"Do they know you have been captured?"

"I suppose so. Of course they must know."

"Very well. All you have to do is to tell the simple truth."

"What is that?"

"Say that you escaped from the jail at Cairo last night by my assistance. That you bribed me to bring you down here and that you pledged your word of honor that I would be allowed to go free after you reached safety."

"But I didn't bribe you."

"You can, though."

"How?"

"By thinking kindly of me and letting me hope."

"Why do you always ask that?" said the girl, resolutely suppressing a desire to throw herself into his arms and tell him to take her all in all. He shook his head and smiled faintly at her.

"I suppose it is too much to ask. Well, never mind."

It was broad daylight now and as the little boat whirled around the bend, the batteries on the island became visible. He urged the skiff toward a jutting pier with vigorous strokes. As they reached the end of the little wharf they were hailed by a picket. Sears swung the boat alongside the landing and waited. The corporal of the guard summoned the sergeant, the sergeant in turn the officer of the day. By great good fortune the officer happened to be a friend of the woman's. He recognized her instantly in spite of the fact that she stood before him on the wharf blushing furiously in her sailor's clothing, a blanket draped picturesquely around her waist. The officer was a gentleman, however, and made no remark other than expressing his pleasure at her arrival.

"Miss Darrell!" he expressed, "I heard that you were a prisoner at Cairo!"

"I was up to last night, but I escaped, thanks to this good friend who brought me here."

"A Southern sympathizer, I suppose?" remarked the officer, looking curiously down at Sears, who sat huddled up in the boat his hat over his eyes.

"Yes," said the woman, hastily.

"Wouldn't you like to join with us, friend?" asked the lieutenant pleasantly.

Sears shook his head.

"I promised him," interrupted the woman, "that he should return unmolested after he brought me here."

"Of course, of course," said the officer gallantly.

"You may go now, my man," said his wife to her husband, stooping down and stretching out her hand to him as she spoke. "I shall never forget your kindness to me. Good-bye."

Sears shook her hand and discovered that she had passed something to him. Making no sign he shoved his boat off and began pulling lustily up the river. He never stopped until he had rounded the bend and was out of sight of the batteries. In all that time he kept his eyes fixed upon the slender boyish figure in the navy blue standing on the wharf by the Confederate officer looking wistfully after him. The thing she had given him was a tiny gold locket. So soon as it was safe to stop he opened it. Inside was an exquisite miniature of the woman he had just left. He looked at it long and earnestly, kissed it, slipped the little chain around his neck and swore in his heart that it should never be parted from him. She

had not given it to him as the result of any sudden impulse evidently. She must have had it in her pocket ready for the time of their separation.

Six weeks after the fall of Island No. 9, Sears, who had spent the time on the staff of General Bransfield, once more joined his uncle on the *Bienville*. He had delivered his message and thus ensured that effective coöperation between the two arms of the service which had resulted in the capture of the island. The meeting between uncle and nephew was an affectionate one. The flag officer knew by certain signals which had been exchanged between the fleet and the army that his nephew had safely got through although he was entirely ignorant of his subsequent actions. After the first greeting Sears asked his uncle about his wife.

"Do you know," said the flag officer, seriously, "she got away from the flagship that night. There's something very suspicious about that young person, pretty as she is."

"Did she leave any word?"

"Only this," said the old man, fumbling in the drawer of his desk.

"This" was a note addresed to him.

"Forgive me. I am not insensible of your kindness. Do not think me ungrateful. You have been so kind to me. Do not judge me harshly. Perhaps I can convince you of my truth and sincerity if we meet in happier days.

EDITH SEARS."

"I will believe in her," said the old flag officer, watching his nephew read; "you are a fortunate fellow, Jack, if you ever win her."

"I shall win her, I am sure," answered his nephew confidently.

"About that commission?"

"Well, sir, I don't believe I can accept it now. You see, with my wife on the other side, I prefer to be a free lance. I can serve my country just as well in this way, perhaps, as if I wore a lieutenant's shoulder straps."

"I agree with you," said the flag officer, gravely.

CHAPTER XII

AND FOR TWO THE WAR IS OVER

The favor of Providence which had been most kind in the way of arranging meetings between Sears and his wife seemed to have been withdrawn from the young couple after Edith's escape down the river, for a long time had elapsed and he had not seen her again. He had not even received a word from her. Nothing had come from her except a bunch of forget-me-nots which had reached him mysteriously in a letter without signature or other writing. There had been no other tidings, no other sign. He treasured the faded flowers, however, and tried to believe that they carried a message of hope for him; but it was hard work hoping against such silence. He did not content himself with mere hoping, either. He had searched for her desperately. He had spent his money freely to get some tidings of her or to learn anything about her, but with little success.

The flowers, the locket containing her exquisite face, which she had given him when they had parted on the landing, and his deathless memories of her, were all that he had. She had evidently gone far South, he divined, for, although his duties along the river took him to the shore on different occasions, he could get no trace of her anywhere. So that at last he be-

gan to despair. Such avoidance, such silence, was certainly premeditated. He had made no impression upon her. In spite of all he had done he had failed. No woman who loved could leave him so long without a word, a sign—yet there were the forget-me-nots!

On board the *Bienville* he had participated in the brilliant fighting on the river at Island No. 10, at Fort Pillow, and especially at Memphis, where the Confederate River Defense Fleet was destroyed. After the fall of Memphis he had gone ashore and endeavored to hunt up Mrs. Gaillard, his wife's aunt, with whom she had told him she had intended to stay, and whose name he had carefully remembered. Indeed he had been most zealous to further the destruction of the Confederate River Defense Fleet in order that Memphis might fall into the Federal hands, and full of hope he ransacked the town only to fail again.

Mrs. Gaillard was a person of some importance in Memphis evidently, and he easily found her house. To his bitter disappointment it was closed. A few days before the action had taken place the lady had gone down the river, no one knew where, no one would tell. He did learn, however, after most assiduous investigation, that a certain young woman who had busied herself in the extemporized hospitals among the sick and wounded Confederate soldiers with which the place was filled, had gone South with her. This at least convinced him that his wife was yet alive. That was the last, the only trace he got of her for a long time. The South had opened its arms and swallowed her up. She was gone, she had vanished, she was lost to him.

He longed to see her with a passion that fairly consumed him. The circumstances in which he found himself were so extraordinary that he thought that no man could ever have experienced the like before. He would have given anything and everything he possessed only to have looked at her once more. Just to have seen her! He did not allow himself to dwell upon anything more than a sight of her. That in his present state of mind would be enough. If he had not been so busy in the field he would have died of anxiety. As it was, the nervous strain under which he had lived, the intense longing which burned in his veins, had reduced him to a rather depressed condition.

He had also persistently refused the naval commission. He would hold himself free so long as his wife was in the South—free to help her. All this, however, did not prevent him from doing brilliant service for his country, and his name was known far and wide in both fleet and army as a man who could be depended upon. He had recklessly undertaken the most desperate adventures in different parts of the South despite the personal hazard, hoping that in one of these he might get trace of her. Although he had been entirely unsuccessful in that quest one of his adventures had not been without profit in another direction. Thereafter he hugged to his heart in the breast pocket of his coat a certain document which he longed to give to his wife. But the desired opportunity never came.

On her part his wife was no less anxious for a meeting than was her husband. Two years of war-

fare, strange and paradoxical as it may seem, had actually taken some of the bitterness out of the animosity between the North and the South, especially in the case of those who actually fought against one another, or of those who, in the hospitals or elsewhere, came in close contact with the results of the fighting. When a man was sick, or dying, it made little difference whether he had worn gray or blue. There were touches of nature—thank God for it!—which Southerners and Northerners experienced on field, in camp, or in ward or prison, which made all men akin.

From the day on which she had watched her husband rowing around the bend of the great river away from her, Edith Sears had flung prejudice, dissimulation, indifference, to the winds. She loved him, she loved him even as he loved her. Save for her aunt, in whose society she had been thrown but little throughout her life, she was alone in the world. The men of the South with whom she had come in contact were too occupied at that desperate season for gallantries. They were fighting heroically for the control of the river; to retain it was vital to their cause. The struggle engrossed their every effort. And she herself gave no opening for any attachment. She kept herself free—for him, and rejoiced that it was so.

She lived her life alone, despite the fact that she worked, as did many gentle Southern women in those trying times, like a Trojan in the hospitals. It was the thought of her Northern husband that made her perhaps more of an angel of mercy—when all were kind—to the wounded Northern prisoners who were

sometimes brought into the wards. Many of them lived to thank her and some died blessing her.

There was something terrible about the work of the hospital. For one thing she never scanned the faces of the Union patients without a paralyzing fear that he might be among them. Northern newspapers filtered through the lines from time to time and these she eagerly searched for word of him, but as he was not in the regular service he was never mentioned. She did not even know whether he had received the little bunch of forget-me-nots she had so daringly sent him in a moment when passion had overcome prudence, maidenly reserve, everything. Perhaps if she had been left to herself she might have remained in Memphis, when the ironclads came down the river; but a certain pride, false or not, as that may be, but very real, kept her from absolutely throwing herself into his arms, and she accompanied her aunt, who viewed her going as a matter of course. She longed for a sight of him, she longed for a touch of his hand, the sound of his voice, but he must seek her and find her. It was the old instinct that makes a woman retreat—a man pursue. She must fly, he must follow after. If once more she was thrown into his society and he wanted her—well, it would depend upon him whether they should ever part. So she waited and hoped—but like his it was a long wait and a hard hope.

Fourth of July, 1863, found sadness and sorrow abiding in the trenches, the ruined dwellings, and the primitive cave houses of Vicksburg. After months of hard fighting in many desperate battles, after a

splendid defense and a long hard siege, the agony of suspense was over. The agony of defeat was beginning. General Pemberton had surrendered his army to the Union troops, who early in the morning had entered the town and were now coming down the street which led past the bluffs to the water's edge. Down on the river front the huge black ironclads of the Union, their scarred and battered sides giving vivid evidence of the fierce battles they had survived while running the batteries on the river, were steaming slowly up to the wharves, flags and ensigns fluttering proudly from every staff.

With many others, Edith Sears had lived in a cave scooped out of the bluffs. During the siege her aged aunt had died from exposure, hardship and perhaps disappointment. She, herself, had become so worn out from her constant labors in the crowded hospitals that the surgeon in charge had at last peremptorily ordered her away from them. Her work was practically done anyway. For by the time she had broken down everybody realized that the end was at hand; all efforts at relief had failed, the iron grip of the besiegers was never relaxed, and the Federal troops would be in the city in a short time. Would he be with them, she wondered? And the hope back of the wonder robbed the surrender of its sorrow. She hated herself for this apparent disloyalty to the South, but could not help it. Somewhere in the vicinity he must be. She was certain of that. There were the ironclads below her in the river. She thought she recognized the *Bienville* among them. Was he aboard her?

She sat listlessly enough, for she was ill and very tired, on a rude chair at the mouth or door of the cave, wondering and hoping. She had not strength to resist him now. Nor desire to do so even had she possessed the power. When he came he would find her ready to go to him, to go with him anywhere. She loved him and longed for him—her husband—almost with the passion of the bereft.

There was a sound of drums in the street cut through the bluffs and leading down past the water batteries with their silent cannon to the levee by the river. Some of the negroes of the town were shouting and yelling about a moving mass upon the hills. For some reason, she scarcely knew why, she rose to her feet and stepped out through the doorway into the bright sunlight of the smiling morning. She leaned against an empty box, her hands shading her eyes and looked into the street. There they came, a long line of men, the dust and dirt of hard campaigning, of nights and days in the trenches, thick upon their faded blue uniforms. Bayonets gleamed in the light. A starry striped flag that once she had loved but now looked upon as a badge of oppression, tossed gaily in the soft air over the heads of the moving men. The Union troops! They were here! At last!

She stared at them fixedly with a sudden sense of shock, although she had known they were coming. It was over then. Vicksburg had fallen. The Confederacy was doomed. The great river would belong to the men of the black ironclads below them. He and his would be master of her and hers. She would

fight no more, only let him come, and come quickly, and take her. She could not sustain these sorrows and griefs and disappointments unless he were there to help her—his strength for her weakness, the man for the woman. She little dreamed that fate was to reverse the position in the closing drama.

In front of the advancing soldiers rode a large powerful man with long black hair and a heavy drooping black moustache, a stark, swarthy-faced, Indian looking man, of magnificent proportions, a born soldier every inch of him. By his side rode a smaller man, short of figure, insignificant of form, with a close-cut beard and a moustache slightly gray. He held a cigar unlighted in his firmly closed mouth. He rode straight on, looking neither to the right nor left. Back of the two clattered a brilliant staff, and then the men, the oncoming all-conquering men in dusty blue.

As they drew nearer the watching woman divined that those two in the lead must be persons of consequence. Who they were she could not tell at first. She noticed as they approached her that the tall man on the coal black horse spoke to the other—the little man—with a distinct air of deference. As they came closer still, she caught a glimpse of the smaller man's face under his plain slouch hat. He looked as if he could walk through a stone wall if he made up his mind to it. There was tremendous force in his presence, the more oppressive because it was so voiceless, so mute, as it were power without parade. There was a sort of stubborn audacity about him, to which the susceptible and prescient woman thrilled.

There were about him none of the trappings of rank, yet it must be the hated General Grant! She stared at him closely, realizing as many did that he was the final foeman against which her beloved South must match its glorious steel. And she realized, too, as most did not, that his voice in the end would speak its doom sentence. He was so quiet and still, so evidently preoccupied, that it was not until General Logan, he of the black mustache and the herculean proportions, called his attention to her, that the little general looked in her direction.

And indeed, worn and wasted as she was, she was well worth even the inspection of the great captain. She drew herself up instantly under the stimulus of his steady, searching glance. He smiled at her standing there, pale but resolute, helpless but determined, typical of the South from which she sprang, and then he raised his hat to her and bowed rather awkwardly. His face changed slightly. She had not believed so iron a man could look so kind. A sudden idea sprang into the woman's mind. He who had conquered would help. She made a step toward him and stretched out her hand. Her instincts were not at fault. He reined in his horse by her side instantly.

"Are you not General Grant, sir?" she asked.

He nodded, evidently being chary of words.

"Do you know—is there a—Mr. Sears in the fleet?"

He looked at her more closely, a note of interrogation in his eyes.

"He was secretary of the flag officer—" she went on.

"He is on the *Bienville*," said the general kindly.

"He is my—friend. Is he——"

"Badly wounded in the assault on your works on the twenty-second."

With a low cry the woman laid her hand on her breast and shrank back.

"Can I do anything for you?" asked the general.

"May I go to him there?"

"Certainly. If you have trouble getting aboard apply to me."

He looked at her a moment, pity in his glance, raised his hat again, spoke to his horse and rode away to his place at the head of the column, which had not waited for him, but had marched on in obedience to his signal. It was a brief interview, but she would not forget it.

As fast as she could go she ran toward the river. She took advantage of short cuts not practicable for the army and thus arrived long before the Union soldiers. Panting and breathless she reached the wharf just as the *Bienville,* which she recognized from the broad pennant flying above her, tied up. Pushing through the crowd of idlers curiously watching this operation she presented herself at the gangway.

"The flag officer," she said to the astonished marine on guard, "I must see him at once! Tell him that Mrs. Sears——"

But the flag officer was near. At the sound of her voice he turned.

"Thank heaven!" he cried, stretching out his hands in welcome. "You are come at last."

He drew her inboard and turned her steps aft.

"My—my husband?" she faltered.

"Living yet, but in sad case. He has been praying, dying for you."

"Let me see him!" cried the woman in a low tense voice.

"You will control yourself?"

"Yes, yes! Let me see him at once!"

In a few moments she was in the cabin.

"He is there," said the flag officer, pointing to a spare stateroom opposite his own. "Shall I prepare him?"

"No, no."

"Gently, then, handsomely!"

She stood for a moment with her hands pressed against her heart and then opened the door, opened it so softly that it did not make a sound. There on the berth lay her lover, her husband. He had happened to be with General Grant's staff on the day of the final assault upon the works of Vicksburg. Grant had employed him to carry a message. He had volunteered for the duty, the general's other aids being engaged. He had got in the very thick of the fighting, had rallied a regiment, led it to the attack, and had planted its flag on the parapet, only to be shot down with the colors. A rifle bullet had severely torn his shoulder. At the same time an exploding shell had filled him with pieces of steel. In his run down condition the effect had been most serious. He had not recovered from his wounds as he should have done. Worst of all, he was pining for her.

He lay there, his eyes closed as if asleep. She stared at him, her heart yearning over him. She

stretched out her hands to him, called him voicelessly, every throb of her heart beating for him. How long she stood there she could not tell. Presently he opened his eyes and looked about him. His wandering glance comprehended her, stopped wavering, remained fixed upon her in a curious half-frightened stare.

"Edith!" he said softly and doubtfully, at last. "It can't be."

"Yes, it is I."

He seemed bewildered. He glanced through the open port at the wharf timbers opposite which the flagship lay.

"Where are we?" he asked finally very faintly.

"It is Vicksburg," said the woman, "it was surrendered to-day. And I—your general told me you were here and—wounded—and—I came."

"Thank God," said Sears, "it's not too late. I guess I'm done for now. You will get your release, anyway, but I want you to know I tried to make things easy for you. Look under my pillow."

"Don't talk of that now," she protested.

"I must," he went on, "there are papers. Will you get them?"

She slipped her hand beneath his pillow—how she thrilled as she touched his face—and drew forth two folded papers.

"The short one—open it."

Obeying his direction, a glance put her in possession of the contents.

"My wedding certificate!" she exclaimed in great surprise.

"I got that from Chaplain Brown six months ago."

"Thank you," she said gratefully, smiling at him, "I only needed this. You are so good to me."

She knelt down on the chair at the side of his high berth and leaned closer over him. She pressed the certificate to her lips and smiled at him with eyes that were almost in tears. Then she took his wasted hand in her own. He did not tell her that he had procured the certificate at the imminent risk of his life. Although possibly she may have divined it with that instinct that Providence sometimes vouchsafes to loving women. It meant so much to her. It was the outward and visible sign of that she cherished and which she had come there to acknowledge.

"Now you must look at the other paper," he said at last.

"What need now?"

"You will find it as valuable as the first. I beg you to examine it."

She drew back a little and opened it. It was a statement duly executed before the proper authorities, signed and witnessed, stamped and sealed, detailing the circumstances of their marriage; stating how they had chanced to be made man and wife, and solemnly declaring that in view of these circumstances no objection would be made by the affiant to the annulment which he joined with his pseudo-wife in praying might be granted by any court of competent jurisdiction.

She read it with a deepening frown, at the same time a keen pang of agony shot through her heart.

"You wish this?" she said quietly, all her soul in her eyes.

"What I wish is of little moment now," he answered promptly. "I shall never get well."

"Why do you say that?" she interrupted in swift agony.

"Because I do not wish to get well without you," he replied directly. "I drew this up when I was in health and I have kept it since then so that you might see, even if I died, that I had been true to my promise to take no advantage, although I loved you—I love you now, more than life, death, everything!"

His passion lent unwonted strength to his voice.

"I——" The woman hesitated. "I refuse," she went on bravely, "to be set aside in this manner. See!"

She held up the document of renunciation before his eyes. She tore it in half, brought the pieces together, and tore it again and again. Sears eagerly watched her. There was a light in his eyes that was good to see. She leaned across him, extended her hand through the port, and the scattered papers fell into the water of the river and the current swept them away. She was blushing furiously.

"They are gone, forever!" she said.

"What does this mean?" he asked, his soul at gaze, his life at touch.

"It means that I love you! That everything else is nothing! That I am yours if you want me. If you care for me! That I will go with you where you will, when you will. Oh, my husband, you won't die, you cannot! You must live for me!"

She tore the document of renunciation in half.
Page 306.

"Now that I have you," he said smiling bravely, "I shall live forever."

. . . . . .

"Do you see this ring?" she continued, after a while, drawing it from her breast and unclasping the chain which had held it. "I have waited for this moment."

She laid it in his trembling hand.

"You mean?" he asked again.

"I want you to put it on once more."

Guided by her he slipped the heavy seal ring upon the ring finger of her heart hand again. Then in response to a mute invitation in his eyes she drew his head gently to her breast and kissed him. It was the seal of their wedding. There was life and health in her sweet caress.

The door opened presently behind them. She glanced up, but proud of her relationship did not release him. The old flag officer looked down at the two.

"I was afraid," he faltered, "you were so quiet ——"

"You need not fear anything further for me, Uncle John," said the young man in a stronger voice than he had used for months, "she loves me. I am going to get well."

It was a trite remark, quite worn out by frequent exploitation, but the flag officer could think of nothing else to say than,

"God bless you, my children!"

Then with wise discretion he turned and walked out and closed the door behind him. The war was over for those two.

III

The Maid of the Valley

III

The Maid of the Valley

CHAPTER I

THE GREAT SECESSION

It had come at last. The long-debated ordinance of secession had been passed, the governor had promptly approved it, and it had been duly promulgated amid the ringing of bells, the firing of cannon, and the shouts of the unthinking populace. Virginia, mother of Presidents, chief among the great commonwealths which had composed the American Republic, had gone out of the Union. For weal or for woe she had taken her stand. She had devoted herself to the cause of her seven Southern sisters which, in rapid succession, beginning with South Carolina, had seceded from the original aggregation, and had banded themselves together as the Confederate States of America.

The South had been waiting and hoping. To many Southerners it seemed that the momentous action of that April day settled the question of their future. The North, they reasoned, might have been

fought before with good hope of success, but with Virginia, wealthy and populous, with all the prestige of its past, on the side of the South, the ultimate triumph of the South was assured; the independence of the Confederacy was certain, especially as the action of the "Old Dominion" gave the keynote to three other remaining Southern States, which, shortly thereafter, followed Virginia's example.

Not every Virginian shared in the general rejoicing over the drastic solution of continuity thus effected, however. Some of them there were of her best citizenship who went with their State with a sadness which no popular enthusiasm could dissipate or even diminish. Some there were—and these among the greatest of her children—who had borne the commission of the United States in the army or navy, who had loved its service, who had reverenced and honored its flag. These realized clearly that the inevitable result of that day's choice was armed opposition to a government to which in their boyhood they had sworn allegiance, of which for years they had been staunch supporters, and they bitterly regretted the stern necessities of their course.

The wiser heads—always in the hopeless minority—recognized that the differences of opinion as to the powers and prerogatives of the States with reference to those of the central government, which, with slavery as an inciting cause for raising the question at all, had brought about the conflict, could eventually be settled in but one way; and that not until the dread arbitrament of the sword had been rendered would the cause be finally determined.

Yet most of the people were not unwilling to secede. Many of these balanced the claim of Nation against State and, from the sternest and loftiest conception of duty, concluded that the preponderance of right was with the smaller territory, the unit rather than the aggregate.

The voice of the few had been against secession. When it was accomplished, however, they accepted it, hesitatingly in some instances, but almost universally. A little handful of men, scattered in different sections, did not acquiesce in the determination of the majority. As there were Copperheads in the North so there were Union men in the South. The man who renounced his allegiance, the soldier or sailor, for instance, who had been bred to the profession of arms, gave up much; but the few who, in spite of the overwhelming force of public opinion, refused to be swayed by the almost unanimous voice of the people and declared themselves unflinchingly for the Union and against secession, even after it had become a settled fact—these suffered more than any class of citizens within the United States.

Such a man was Colonel Richard Trent. This veteran soldier and gentleman owned a large plantation on the eastern slope of that range of the Blue Ridge Mountains which lay to the westward of the Shenandoah Valley.

He was a widower with one daughter and two sons. Rosalie Trent was eighteen years old when Virginia went out of the Union. Her brother, Richard, was twenty-two; her younger brother, Tom, fourteen.

Colonel Trent was an invalid. He had been a volunteer soldier in the Mexican War, where he had highly distinguished himself, had been wounded there, and had never recovered completely from the injury. He was an enthusiastic horseman, and shortly before the outbreak of the Civil War had been thrown from his horse, a thing which never would have happened had it not been for the disabling wound which had made riding a dangerous pastime. This accident left him a more or less helpless cripple.

He was a stern, hot-tempered autocrat in his family and in society—as determined as he was brave, as obstinate as he was high-spirited. His elder son, Richard, possessed much of his father's temper, and chafed under the restraints which the old man sought to impose upon him. Relations between them were often more or less strained, but there had as yet been no open rupture. The younger son was a merry, jolly little boy, very much in awe of his father. Rosalie adored the old colonel, and, in turn, her father's heart was set upon her as it was upon no other being.

Many had been the discussions in the little family over the great question of the hour, discussions usually one-sided, since Colonel Trent did most of the talking therein, no one, except Richard, venturing to cross him in debate. It developed, however, that young Richard Trent was for secession and the Confederacy heart and soul. To Thomas it was merely a matter vividly exciting and full of deep interest. He had as yet no particular convictions concerning

the question. Rosalie Trent sided with her elder brother in her heart, but tenderness and consideration for her father kept her from vehemently expressing her opinion in opposition to him.

Rosalie Trent had a lover, to whom she was engaged—Hugh Herrick, who owned an adjacent plantation, smaller in extent than Colonel Trent's broad acres, but still a very tidy bit of land. He owned it in fee simple, entirely unencumbered. He was an orphan, and had been practically brought up in Colonel Trent's home.

An older and a more tactful man than young Richard Trent, Hugh Herrick actually got on better with the old colonel than did any of his own children. Herrick was a young man of the highest character, and as good to look at, in a manly way, as Rosalie was from the standpoint of feminine beauty and character. The match was a desirable one from every point of view. It had received the old man's sanction, and the young people, who had been friends and companions from infancy, were now devotedly in love with each other.

Herrick was the captain of the local cavalry troop, which had its headquarters at the neighboring town of Staunton. Richard Trent, who was two years younger than his friend, was first sergeant of the same troop.

Herrick had carefully kept out of the discussions precipitated by the old colonel on the question of secession. His convictions as to his own proper course of action in case his State separated from the Union, were deep and abiding. Virginia and the

South were to him supreme in their demand upon his allegiance. An aristocrat of aristocrats, he despised the North as a fancied aggregation of fanatics and money grubbers, and was in fact anxious for secession.

He was an impetuous, enthusiastic, hot-tempered young man for all his tact and self-command. It was the realization of this that made him avoid the subject with Colonel Trent, for he knew that if once he began he would lose his self-control. He had many things to learn, but there was good stuff in him, and he was fully worthy the affection and admiration of even so fair a girl as Rosalie. He had every quality for a successful lover—or for a cavalry officer, for that matter!

Rosalie also refused to discuss the subject with her lover. She had a mistaken idea that she could not reveal her real feelings even to him, without great disloyalty to her father. Herrick, therefore, had no idea as to what the woman he loved really thought of the burning question then uppermost in all minds. He dreaded to know, and was therefore glad not to insist upon any explanation from her. When he was with her he simply loved her; they talked lovers' nothings and let politics go hang!

The day came when the matter had to be settled one way or the other. Colonel Trent had a house in Staunton. He frequently went there for medical treatment which he could not get on his plantation; consequently he kept it open and ready for use at any time. Happening to be there on the morning the Act of Secession was proclaimed, he promptly

flung to the breeze, from a flagstaff in front of his house, a large new United States flag as an evidence of his feelings on the subject.

Then he had himself wheeled out on the front porch in his invalid chair and sat there grimly awaiting developments. They were not long in coming.

The first passer-by halted in astonishment at the sight. He looked from the flag to the stern old figure, and as he did so Colonel Trent lifted his hat in salute to the colors, with a proud glance at the rippling folds of the great banner.

Full of the news the man started down the street on a dead run. Ten minutes later a mob had gathered before the house. They caught sight of the flag and the colonel—a slight rail fence being the only barrier between the crowd and the old man—and they at once demanded that the flag be hauled down.

At the first roar from the mob the colonel's children, who had been busy indoors and had known nothing about the flag raising, came out on the porch and surveyed the scene in great surprise. Each acted on a different impulse.

Rosalie instantly stepped to the side of her father and placed her hand on the back of his chair, standing erect, confronting the angry people with the air and mien of a young goddess. Her heart sank at the terrible possibilities of the situation. Yet her course was clear; whatever happened she must uphold her father.

Richard stopped halfway between the door and his father and stared at the old man and the flag in unspeakable dismay and confusion of mind. A dark

flush spread over his handsome countenance. He realized that this was the hour in which he would have to choose; that a momentous decision was now forced upon him and could no longer be postponed. Yet he neither went to his father's side nor joined the people, but stood hesitant between them. Thomas, the younger son, ran to the fence and climbed up in the boughs of an apple tree, where he could see and hear everything.

By this time the street had become black with people. They were growing irresponsibly angry as their demands remained unheeded, for the colonel met their appeals and commands with a quiet disdain, a silent but none the less withering contempt.

Furious mutterings came from the crowd; shouts and curses fell upon the air of the pleasant spring morning. There was something dauntless in the appearance of the old soldier, and something touching in the sight of his fair, proud, beautiful young daughter standing by his side, that had a sobering effect upon those nearest to them; but this was lost upon the constantly increasing multitude upon the outskirts.

CHAPTER II

A SEPARATION OF HEARTS

A YOUNG lawyer of the city, a casual acquaintance, who had been drawn thither by idle curiosity, but who had divined the purpose of the mob, assumed the position of spokesman for the rest. He was not without hope of compromising the quarrel between the colonel and his fellow citizens, and spoke at first with the intent of persuading the old man to a reasonable course.

"Colonel Trent," he began, courteously, taking his hat in his hand and waving it for a silence which he had difficulty in winning, "I——"

"Down with the nigger lover!" shouted a voice —this in allusion to the fact that the colonel had recently freed his slaves.

"To hell with the old abolitionist!" cried another.

"Let him go to the United States where he belongs!" yelled a third.

"Silence, please!" shouted the lawyer, seconded by others who wished to appeal to the recalcitrant veteran.

Some one in the crowd yelled "Mount him!" and in a few seconds the young attorney was forced to take his stand on the broad gate post, where all could see and hear him.

"Colonel Trent," he again began, so soon as he could secure comparative quiet from the now thoroughly roused people, "we have every respect for you personally as a man"—there were a few mutters of approval at this—"but for your opinions on secession, the question of the day, we have nothing but —contempt!"

It was a harsher word than he had intended to use, but he was carried beyond himself by the fierce passion of the people; and this time a roar of applause burst from every throat. The sound inspired him to proceed more boldly.

"The sovereign state of Virginia, sir, has always been in favor of free thought and free speech, but it has reserved the right to curtail liberty of action in accordance with the will of the majority. Therefore, we demand that you lower that flag. You can go North if you wish to fly it, or to live under it."

"And who made you," asked the old soldier, incisively, "the voice of Virginia?"

"We did!" yelled a man in the crowd, and the mob echoed the declaration.

"There is my authority," answered the lawyer, grimly, pointing toward the sea of angry faces. "I beg you, I urge you, to take down that flag. Nay, I now command you to do it, lest the consequences to yourself should be serious."

"That is the flag of my country," said Colonel Trent, struggling to his feet. "I was born under it. I fought under it. I am willing to die under it! I am alone, unarmed, a cripple. You may kill me where I stand, but I swear to God I will never haul down that flag!"

He stepped to the side of the porch, reached out his hand, cast off the halliards and gathered them to his breast.

There was something noble and inspiring in the appearance of the old man. For a moment the mob was checked. Then young Richard spoke.

"Friends," he cried, passionately, striding to the edge of the porch, "I——"

"Are you a friend to such as these?" interrupted the old man, scornfully, but his son gave no heed.

"You know how I feel on this question. I am heart and soul for Virginia."

"You shall never more be my son, sir!" cried the colonel, and his words were received with a roar of execration from the people.

Again Richard paid no attention.

"But this is my father. He is an old man, an old soldier. I wish to God he hadn't raised that flag. It has no place here. We don't want to see it unless we meet it in front of our guns and swords, to beat it down. But he is my father. I should be a coward, a hound, if I allowed anyone to mistreat him. Who attacks him must first deal with me!"

He stepped to the side of the old man, and although his father thrust him violently from him he resolutely kept his position. The pressure of the mob, most of whom were too far away to get the effect of Richard's fine and noble defense, pushed the others against the fence. The thin, slight paling gave way; the lawyer on the post who had been vainly endeavoring to control the situation, was pitched headlong into the mass, which surged toward the porch. Young Thomas fell

from the tree on the back of the ringleader, to whom he clung like a wild cat.

Rosalie sprang to her father's side, placing her arm around him. The old man, assisted by both children, struggled to advance upon the people, who were seething and raging in front of him. Just as violent hands were lifted to strike him there was a clattering of hoofs on the street.

Some one had told Herrick that a mob threatened Colonel Trent. Gathering a handful of his men who happened to be at hand, arming and mounting them as best he could in the hurry, he galloped down the street with them toward the thick of the fray. As they raced along they formed themselves in military order. Some had pistols, others swords. They forced their way through the crowd at the critical moment. Their appearance made an instant diversion. Without seriously using their weapons, by threateningly handling and exhibiting them, they at last reached the porch and drove back the ringleaders. The mob was in bad temper, however, and weapons began to appear here and there.

The colonel had been forced backward. Richard, with torn clothes and other evidences of fierce fighting about his person, was standing in front of him, with clenched fists and blazing eyes. Tom was by his side. Rosalie, pale as death, was still supporting him. Some one had wrenched the halliards from the colonel's hand in the mêlée and the flag was down, torn to tatters by the furious men. Herrick spoke to the people briefly and directly.

"You have had your way," he cried, with cutting

scorn; "you have assaulted an aged cripple, an unarmed man and a woman. You have hauled down that flag. If you don't disperse by the time I count ten, so help me God, I'll open fire upon you!"

He drew a big revolver from his holster as he spoke, cocked it and gave orders to his men. Those who had firearms followed their young leader's example, the others handled their swords menacingly.

"What gives you authority over us, Hugh Herrick?" snarled some one, resentfully.

"This," answered Herrick, promptly, taking a paper from his pocket and shaking it aloft. "It is a commission as captain of cavalry from the sovereign State of Virginia, God bless her!"

"Three cheers for Captain Herrick and the Black Horse Cavalry!" cried a man, alluding to the local name of the troop.

"One! Two! Three! Four!" began Herrick, imperturbably, utterly indifferent to the cheering, and as the men nearest him looked into his rigid face they realized that his threat to shoot would be made good without fail. By the time he had reached "six" the mob was in motion. At "ten" they were scattered in all directions and moving rapidly.

Presently the street was deserted save for the uniformed troopers. There were but a dozen of them, and Herrick divided them into two squads and directed them to patrol the block in every direction. He also dispatched a message to the mayor and the city marshal, telling them what had been done, and suggesting that steps be taken to prevent any further

molestation of Colonel Trent. Then he dismounted from his horse and approached the porch.

"That was fine; that was splendid of you, Herrick!" began Richard.

"It was nothing at all," said Herrick. "The cowards! To take advantage of an old man and a woman!"

By this time the colonel had been helped to his feet and had once more gained his chair.

"Mr. Richard Trent," he began, with measured formality in spite of the fierce anger burning in his heart, "you have this day publicly cut yourself off from me as Virginia has cut herself off from the Union. You may go. I wish to see no more of you."

"Father——" protested the young man.

"Do not say another word, sir. I am done with you. Go!"

Richard stared at the colonel's face for a moment, then squaring his shoulders and turning abruptly, he dashed into the house.

"Thomas, I have heard nothing from you. What do you decide?" asked the colonel.

"I don't—know—sir," faltered the boy, very much more afraid of his father than he had been of the mob. "Give me time to think it over."

His father had never before honored him by asking his opinion, and he was bewildered and very much alarmed at the terrible severity of the old man's manner.

"Very well. You are young yet. You shall have time. I wish to be just to all men. As for you," continued the colonel, turning to Herrick, "if I mis-

take not you said something about a commission from the State of Virginia in her armed force, which is to be used——"

"In her defense, sir," interrupted Herrick, swiftly.

"I can only think against the United States after Sumter," went on the old man, sternly.

"If necessary, yes," admitted Herrick, hotly.

"Very well, sir. Here stands my daughter, Miss Rosalie Trent. You have been betrothed to her with my sanction. You will this day choose between the United States and Virginia, that paper and this lady. Retain the one and lose the other."

"By Heaven! sir——" began Herrick, impetuously.

"The subject admits of no discussion," returned the colonel, immediately. "I am for the United States. I will have no fellowship with its enemies."

"And what do you say?" asked Herrick, turning to the girl he adored, who stood, white-faced and desperate, by her father's side.

Her throat was dry, she could not articulate. She looked from the old man she honored and cherished to the young man she loved and adored.

"I—I——"

"Speak, miss!" thundered her father, striking the arm of his chair. "Do you desert me, too? The Union?"

"Miss Rosalie——" pleaded the lover.

"Hugh," she began, softly, at last, "you know that I love you, but I must go with father. My sympathies——"

"Rosalie," cried her father, sternly, "what are

you saying? Are you for the United States or are you for——"

"Rosalie," said Herrick again, this time more quietly and with a strange dignity in his voice, "your father has forced this choice upon me. I am warranted in passing it on to you. I love you, God knows! To win you for my wife has been the dream of my life; but Virginia needs all her sons—and daughters. I propose to devote myself to her service absolutely. Will you go with me? As my wife, will you do all that a wife can for the cause of the South?"

"You are cruel!" cried the girl. "Can't you see?"

"I see nothing but that I must choose between you and Virginia, that you must choose between Virginia and your father."

"Right for once, sir," said the colonel.

"And which do you choose, Hugh?" asked Rosalie, feeling in some way insulted at being made the subject of public contention between these two passionately angry men.

"I choose Virginia!" answered her lover, his temper at the seething point. "And you——"

"I choose my father!"

"You have had your answer, Captain Herrick," said the old soldier, an aggravating note of triumph in his voice. "You, too, can go."

Speechless, the young man turned away. He was too angry yet to realize what he had lost, although his honor would not have permitted him to make any other choice if he had been given abundant oppor-

tunity to weigh the matter in cold blood. As for the young girl, she was too outraged and indignant to realize what she had relinquished, although her love and reverence for her father, her sense of duty to him, if she too had enjoyed abundant leisure for consideration, would perforce have made her stand by the lonely, crippled, but indomitable, old figure by her side.

Without a glance Herrick flung himself savagely into the saddle. Before his horse moved off Richard Trent came out on the porch, ready for his departure.

"Going, Herrick?" he said, striving desperately to speak unconcernedly. "I'll go with you. Good-by, father"—he might as well have addressed a stone image—"Good-by, Rosalie."

"I forbid you to speak to him!" cried her father, but the girl ran to her brother, and taking him in her arms kissed him tenderly.

"Good-by, youngster," continued Richard.

"Good-by, Bud," said Thomas, choking back a sob and shaking his brother's hand vigorously.

Richard lingered a moment and then walked away, his hand on the pommel of Herrick's saddle. The latter restrained the pace of his horse to suit that of his friend. Herrick, never turning, held his head high, although his heart was breaking. Richard, younger and less self-contained, bent his head and stumbled along beside the horse, tears rolling down his cheeks.

Back on the porch, the girl threw herself on her knees at the side of her father, buried her face in her hands, and shook with dry sobs. The old man laid

his tremulous hand upon her bowed head. He said nothing as to her disobedience of a moment since. Presently he looked at the trembling boyish figure of his youngest son, standing irresolutely before him.

"I give you until to-morrow to decide, sir," he said, sternly. "I will have no uncertainties about me now."

Thus Virginia went out of the Union and so the deadly war began.

It was a war that not only separated States and dissolved a nation, but it divided families, parted friends, severed lovers and broke hearts as well.

CHAPTER III

A MEETING AND A SURPRISE

"Captain Herrick," said the colonel of the regiment, "the general wants some one who knows this section of the country thoroughly to carry an important dispatch down the valley. None of his aides is familiar with the territory, and I took the liberty of mentioning you, for you know every foot of it. If you care to take a night ride, now is your chance."

"Care?" cried Herrick, exultantly. "I'd like nothing better. "I shouldn't want to miss a scrimmage, though."

"I don't know what's up, of course, but I guess you'll get into all the scrimmages you want before old 'Stonewall' gets through with the enemy," returned the colonel, laughing.

"I'll go at once, sir, and thank you very much for giving me the chance."

"Very good, Herrick. Mr. Trent will look after your troop all right."

"Yes, sir. I'll turn the command over to him and report to the general immediately."

"What's up, Hugh?" asked Richard Trent, his subaltern—he had been promoted for gallantry during the first six months of the war, until he was now

first lieutenant of the troop—when Herrick announced his departure.

"I don't know, Dick. The general wants a message delivered somewhere by somebody who knows the ground hereabouts."

"By Jove, I wish the lot had fallen to me! I know it as well as you, and I might have made a chance to see Rosalie, if the route lies in that direction."

"Well, I may be selfish," returned Herrick, gravely, "but I can't surrender the chance to you."

"Of course not."

"And to be honest with you, I wouldn't if I could."

"No more would I, Herrick. Go and have a good time. Perhaps you will see——"

He stopped.

"No," said the young captain, "since she has repudiated me I——"

"Now, see here, Herrick," remonstrated the younger man, "don't put it that way. At heart I'll swear that girl is as true to the South as we are, and when it comes to repudiation—why, you repudiated her as much as she did you."

"Yes, I suppose so," answered Herrick, despondently, "the repudiation, I mean. But I cannot believe she cares anything for the South. She chose to go with your father, and he hates the whole Southern Confederacy and everybody in it."

"Don't say anything against my father," interjected Richard, quickly.

"I don't intend to, Dick, but it's all over between

your sister and myself. There's too great a difference between us. We haven't heard a word from her for over a year. I don't believe I'll ever care for any other girl," he went on, somewhat shamefacedly, at talking thus openly on such a subject. "I suppose there's some little risk in this venture, and I wish to say to you now, Dick, what I have tried to say many times. In case I—I—if I should not—come back, you know——"

He stopped and looked down the mountain-walled valley, beyond the camp, with its white tents, its busy hum of men and animals.

"I want you to know," he went on, "to tell her—that all this hasn't made any difference with me. I had to go with Virginia. God knows I love the Old Dominion, and I wanted to go, but I love your sister too. I never have loved, I never shall love, another woman. I was a fool to let any differences of opinion come between us. If you have a chance—and you will after this war is over and things have settled down—tell her what I have said."

"I will, Hugh," answered Trent, thrusting out his hand.

"Don't say anything more about it, please," continued the captain, shaking his friend's hand and glad to have it over, manlike, being desirous to escape any further discussion of it. "Take good care of the troop. Good-by," and he ran hastily off to the general's tent.

"Captain Herrick?" said the gray-bearded, quiet-looking general, lifting his head and scrutinizing the young man with a glance as keen and as piercing as

the blade of a sword. There was something awe-inspiring in the appearance of General Jackson, and unconsciously Hugh Herrick stiffened his back under the stimulus of that searching look.

"Yes, General," he replied.

"You were born in these parts, I believe?"

"Yes, General."

"You know them thoroughly?"

"Yes, General."

"Good! Here is a dispatch which must be delivered to the commanding officer of the third brigade. General Fulkerson is twenty-five miles down the valley, near Kernstown. The Federal troops, so far as I can learn, are not in force between us and him. Our scouts report the Federal army is about fifteen miles to the eastward of Fulkerson's brigade. Come here, please. You see that crossroad?" continued the general, pointing to the map spread out on the table.

"Yes, sir."

"The ground on the west side of the main road there is hilly and highly defensible. The enemy, it is believed, intend to fall on Fulkerson's brigade. I put it there to tempt them. This dispatch orders General Fulkerson to break camp at daylight, march to the fork of the road, take position on those hills, and, if the enemy attacks, hold them at all hazards. My men will march at midnight. We ought to be—we will be—at the place about ten in the morning. We'll crush them by a flank attack. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir," answered Herrick, smiling with pleas-

ure at the simplicity and effectiveness of the general's plan.

"Tell General Fulkerson that he must extend his line as far as it is safe, to give the enemy the idea that they have my whole division in front of them. I have given you the plan so that if anything should happen and the dispatch should be destroyed, you can tell the general. I should send the orders in duplicate—perhaps I shall send another man after you. But there are no Union forces on your route that will be apt to interfere unless there should be a stray picket—and you must look out for such things yourself."

"I shall get through without fail, sir."

"I'm sure of it," said the general, kindly. "Here are the papers. You will start at nine o'clock. You will of course say nothing about the proposed movement to anyone except General Fulkerson. Good-evening, sir."

"Good-night, General," replied Herrick, turning on his heel and leaving the tent.

He had a couple of hours at his disposal before the time designated for his departure, so he ate his supper, looked well to the feeding and condition of his horse, and then threw himself on the ground for such sleep as he could get until it was time for him to leave. He had been a soldier for over a year now, and he had acquired the valuable habit of going to sleep instantly the opportunity presented itself. He knew that he would get no more sleep that night and probably none the next day, for he intended to remain with Fulkerson's troops until the other brigades

of General Jackson's division joined in the battle. Whatever happened he felt sure he would be in the thick of the fighting and that satisfied Herrick.

Trent awakened him at nine. The sergeant brought around his horse. After a few words of farewell Herrick got into the saddle and slowly started down the road. So soon as he was clear of the camp he struck out at a good pace. For the first dozen miles or so he kept to the highroad and got over the ground rapidly. When it became necessary for him to take a branch road in order to save distance the going was harder. It had rained heavily during the day before and the road was very muddy. Finally he could scarcely urge his tired horse out of a walk.

Although he was keenly alert for anything suspicious he saw nothing and had plenty of time and opportunity for his thoughts as he plodded along. They were twofold, for as it so happened, the branch road by which he had saved several miles debouched into another main road about five miles from General Fulkerson's camp. Half a mile from the intersection of the branch and the main road stood Greenaway Court, the home of old Colonel Trent. It might be that the colonel and his daughter were there. He would pass their house, he calculated, about two o'clock in the morning.

On no account would he stop there, of course. His duty would not permit him to do so. His doubt as to the quality of his welcome in case he should stop, nay, the certainty that he would be unwelcome; his pride, the situation in which he found himself, would

absolutely have precluded it even if an opportunity had served. Still there was joy in merely passing the house which possibly might shelter her.

His thoughts dwelt upon Rosalie unceasingly. He had been convinced the moment he had left her that he had played the fool. It should not have made any difference to him, to his future happiness at any rate, whether she was for the Union or the Confederacy. He could do all the fighting necessary for Virginia and she might hold what opinions she pleased. He was hardly fair to himself, however, for when he remembered he recalled that she also made a choice; that his repudiation was more in the nature of a counter to hers than an independent rejection. The whole affair was a miserable tangle, and he could see no way of straightening it out.

He had thought and thought about it. He had never really known how much he loved her—they had grown up together, and their love affair had been more or less a matter of course—until this terrific and sudden severance had come about in a moment of pride and passion. Neither could he see any method of bridging the gap that lay between them. He certainly could not resign from the Confederate Army. He could not transfer his allegiance from Virginia. Every fibre in his being responded to the appeal of the South—that was not to be considered for a moment. She was probably as zealous for the North as he for the Confederacy. He didn't even blame her for that. She was in the hands of her domineering, wrong-headed old father. There were moments in which he hated the old man; yet, after

all, it was a matter of opinion and no one could rightfully question the honesty of Colonel Trent. Sadly mistaken he surely was, but criminal never.

Herrick had considered these things over and over, and his mind dwelt upon them more powerfully than ever that night as he approached the place where he believed the woman he loved might be asleep.

His reverie, however, was not permitted to run on unchecked. Just before he turned into the main road he heard the sound of horsemen approaching. There were so many of them that they could not be travelers. They might be Confederate or Federal troops, more likely the latter. Until he could ascertain definitely what they were there was but one course to pursue. He put his horse at a gallop and crashed through a hedge which bordered the fields on either side. The night was pitch dark. He dismounted, concealed himself behind the hedge, which was tall enough to hide the horse, especially in the dense blackness which prevailed.

He could see nothing as the horsemen approached him, but he could hear voices. There was an unmistakable Yankee twang about some of them which quite convinced him that it was a squadron of Federal cavalry. What were they doing on that road and where were they going? The situation was suspicious. After they passed it occurred to him that their presence rendered the delivery of his dispatch the more important. He did not dare strike into the main road again for fear of running full tilt into another Union detachment. He concluded to gallop across the fields to a by-road which he remembered

ran behind Greenaway Court; and which, although it was crooked and scarcely more than a bridle path, would eventually bring him to General Fulkerson's headquarters.

He remembered that the country where he was, when he had seen it last, had been meadow land, unplowed. He mounted his horse and at once put him to a gallop. The grass was rather high, but he did not find it difficult going. The animal had become somewhat rested during the wait and he started out gallantly. Unconsciously the young man did not keep a true course in the dark. Instead of going straight across the field he traversed it diagonally. He had lost some time and was in a great hurry. He knew that he should have to go more slowly when he struck the road, so he urged his horse to its highest speed.

In full course the horse, for some unknown reason, stopped as suddenly as if he had been dashed against a stone wall. No horseman could have been prepared for accident of that kind. Herrick was shot over his head as if he had been cast from a catapult. He was pitched upon the ground twenty feet in front of his horse. He landed on the side of his head, plowed up the grass with his face, and lay senseless. How long he remained there he could not tell. When he revived it was not so dark as it had been. Although he ached in every bone, and although his face was scratched and bruised, and he was badly shaken up, he found after a hurried examination that no bones were broken, and that his injuries were not serious though very painful.

He struggled to his feet and looked about him. There was a house not far distant. A faint light shone from one of the lower windows. Around him it was beginning to dawn faintly. He recognized Greenaway Court. He looked back for his horse. A singular accident had killed the brave animal and caused his rider's downfall. A lone tree in the meadow had been cut down recently. For some reason the cutting had been done just about the height of the breast of a horse and the thick stump neatly sawed had been left standing. In the darkness the horse had leaped against the tree stump and had leaped to death. His breast was crushed into a pulp. The resulting fall had broken the poor steed's neck.

Herrick must have lain senseless for some time, for now it was much lighter than it had been, although still dark. He knew he must get another horse or he could never reach General Fulkerson in time. He could only get it from Greenaway Court. There was a grim irony in the idea that he must steal a horse from his whilom friends—for he knew he could procure one in no other way there—but the military exigency did not permit him to hesitate.

He gathered himself up and staggered toward the house. He intended to help himself from the stable. He had lived for months at a time on that plantation, and he knew every foot of it as he knew every room in the house. As he clambered over the fence of the house inclosure he saw another troop—it was certain they were Federal cavalry—entering the front yard. Some of them rode toward the front of the house,

while two squadrons detached themselves from the main body to pass around it on either side.

The Union commander had no particular reason to suspect the owner of the house; he simply intended to surround it as a matter of ordinary war-time precaution. There was but one thing for Herrick to do. He could not go back, there was no outside hiding place. He ran directly toward the house. Just as the first squadron came around the corner he gained the porch unnoticed. He stepped softly across it to the side door. As was the case in all Virginia houses where the war had not changed the habit of centuries, the door was unlocked. He turned the handle and entered the cross hall quietly. As he did so he heard the main body of soldiers halt before the great door of the front hall, while the detachments galloped past the side.

Herrick stopped and listened. There were footsteps on the front porch, and a moment after some one hammered on the great door with a saber. He heard the colonel's sharp voice from his room above calling for servants and lights.

If those soldiers got him all was up with him and his message. He must conceal himself somewhere. He ran up the stairs as lightly as a cat. He knew where the colonel's room was and where his daughter usually slept, in the chamber next to her father's. He also knew where the guest chambers were. It was in the nearest one of these that he determined to conceal himself. It was the only thing he could do.

He turned the handle of the door and entered the

room. A candle was burning on a table in the center. A woman stood by the side of the bed. She had thrown a wrapper over her nightdress and evidently had just lighted a candle. His glance fell upon her. He was startled beyond measure to discover that it was Rosalie Trent, the woman he loved. For some reason she had changed her apartment. She had heard the knocking, her father's voice, and had risen to ascertain the cause of the commotion.

CHAPTER IV

THE GENERAL'S DISPATCH RIDER

Rosalie Trent was not a nervous woman. She was possessed of unbounded courage and determination. Yet the sudden appearance of a mud-stained, bloody-faced man in her room at that hour, coupled with the excitement rapidly pervading the house, alarmed her greatly. She did not immediately recognize her lover. In the first place, he had grown a full beard since she had seen him, and in the second, the mud and wounds on his face further concealed his identity.

"Who are you? What are you doing here?" she asked, striving bravely for self-control.

"Madam"—and by his voice she recognized him instantly—"I am a Confederate soldier. Your house is surrounded by Union troops apparently. I have an important message to deliver. In an attempt to escape I came here. I had to enter the house, to my very great regret. I did not know this was your room. You can betray me if you will."

He recognized that probably all was up with him in any event—at least, that his life was in her hands. He scarcely dared to hope—yet her brother had said that in her heart she sympathized with the South, and only adhered to her father's fortune by

constraint of filial duty. He threw himself upon her mercy; it was the only thing he could do. He would have retired if possible, but the servants had opened the doors and his enemies were in the hall.

She gave no sign whatever that she recognized him. Her action, however, amply atoned for any lack of cordiality in her greeting. She threw open the door of her armoire.

"In there," she said, briefly. "I will do what I can for you."

"Thank you," he returned gratefully, concealing himself among the dresses with which the wardrobe was filled.

By this time the house was fully aroused. The colonel, who required assistance always of late, had been partially dressed, lights had been brought and the master of the house had been carried downstairs to meet the newcomers. The officer in command happened to have heard of Colonel Trent's Union sympathies. So soon as he learned his name he apologized for the intrusion. He said that he and his men had been traveling all night and frankly admitted that as the house looked promising he had thought he could get a good breakfast there for his command. The colonel declared that he would be delighted to give them that which they had intended to take. He summoned his daughter, and presently she appeared fully dressed. The frightened servants were reassured, fires were soon roaring in the great kitchen, and a bounteous breakfast was rapidly made ready for the Union troopers.

Now a state of affairs, most singular, had grown up between Rosalie Trent and her father. After much thought she had gone to the old man and had told him that her sympathies and affections were on the side of the South. When he had indignantly striven to drive her from the house she had coolly refused to leave him. She said that she remained with him because he was alone and that she felt that it was her duty to care for him, especially since her brother Richard had chosen to fight for Virginia—for which, by the way, she did not blame him. In the end she had her way.

Colonel Trent had been more or less mixed up with Union enterprises in the valley. His daughter had warned him frankly that he must not allow her to gain any information concerning his plans. For, while filial duty kept her with him, if she found out anything valuable to the cause of the South she would not hesitate to make use of it if opportunity arose. The situation rather pleased the old man. He dearly loved a fight. It was a grief to him that he could not engage in active hostilities himself. He chuckled grimly when he recovered from the shock of his daughter's announcement, and informed her that she was welcome to use any information she acquired from him. And, indeed, he saw to it that she learned very little.

Her brother Tom had not made any decision as to which side he should espouse during the first year of the war. His father, having settled in his mind that his son would probably decide against the North, had concluded not to put him to the test then, and

Tom had been kept at school, very much to his disgust. He was heart and soul for the South.

So soon as she could do so Rosalie excused herself from her duties as hostess and went back to her room. She opened the door of the wardrobe, out of which Herrick stepped shamefacedly indeed.

"I beg your pardon," he began; "I fear I have mussed and muddied your gowns, but——"

"There is no other way," interrupted the woman, composedly enough, although her heart was beating rapidly at the sight of her lover.

"Were those men after me?" asked the young captain.

"No, they came here for breakfast. It will be served to them in a few moments. I have arranged that they shall all come into the dining-room at once to save trouble. Our negroes will look after their horses. If you can—if you care—I think I can get you out of this."

Now as for caring about getting out, there was no place on earth where Hugh Herrick would rather have remained than there in that room with the woman he loved; but he realized that it was necessary for him to depart at once if possible. He answered promptly:

"It is imperative that I should leave immediately."

"You can't do that until the men come into the house," said the young woman. "Where are you going?"

He looked at her curiously.

"I don't know whether I ought to tell you or——"

"As you please. You seem to have forgotten that I am doing all I can to help you."

"I am going to General Fulkerson's headquarters," he burst out, impulsively, wisely determining to trust her altogether. "Do you know where they are?"

"Perfectly. You can't go by the main road, though."

"By the back road, then?"

"Nor by that."

"Why not?"

"The Union Army is following after this cavalry picket on both roads."

"What?"

"Yes. I heard the cavalry officer tell father so. They are going to catch Stonewall Jackson napping."

"Great Heaven!" exclaimed the young man. "Impossible!"

"They are. They say that Jackson laid a trap for them. He put that brigade out there for them to fall upon it, but they are leaving a regiment or two to skirmish with it while they march south and fall upon Jackson in overwhelming force."

"Miss Rosalie," burst out the man, "for God's sake, get me a horse! I must go at once. Immediately!"

"If you were to offer me heaven and earth," said the woman—she had not given the slightest evidence of recognition, and although her face flushed at the name he called her, she gave no other sign—"I could do nothing for you until the Yankees are in the house. You will have to be patient."

"Patient!" groaned the man, "when Jackson is threatened with annihilation!"

"How can you help it?"

"I must!"

"You must do as I say for one thing or——"

"You won't give me up?" he flashed out.

"Certainly not! Now, if you will take my advice——"

"What is it?"

"You will wash your face, get some of the blood from it, and keep busy until I bring you some breakfast."

She turned toward the doorway.

"You know the house. When I give the signal after you have had something to eat, you can go down the back stairway, through the kitchen and out to the stable," she continued.

"I shall take the best horse in the Federal troop."

"By no means," interrupted the young woman quickly; "the loss would be discovered immediately. There are other horses in the stable. Take mine."

"What! Whitefoot?"

"Whitefoot," assented the girl, firmly.

"Miss Rosalie," began the man, "how can I ever thank you? I—we—thought you—that you——"

"Your thoughts are nothing to me, sir," answered Miss Rosalie, seeing that it was useless to keep up the pretense of ignorance any longer. "I am not doing this for you, but for—Virginia."

"But your father?"

"He knows all. I have told him frankly that if I became possessed of information that would be use-

ful to the South I should use it. If he knew you were here he would—lock me up—or——"

"You are taking much trouble for me."

"Not for you, sir—for the South. But I must go now. I shall bring you something in a few moments."

"Miss Rosalie, forgive me."

"I have nothing to forgive. You made your choice. You insulted me on the porch that day."

"Insulted you?"

"By doubting me. By making conditions for my affection. I have put you out of my heart forever."

They were brave words, and rang true, but were as false as well could be. She gave him no time for reply. She turned quickly and left the room. Her advice was good. Making no noise whatever lest he should betray himself he washed his face—observing as he did so how horribly grimed and bruised he was—and dusted his uniform as well as he could. He had scarcely completed these preparations when she entered the room bearing a pot of coffee, a plate of beaten biscuit and some bacon and potatoes, which she had pilfered from the kitchen herself. He had been thinking deeply over the situation meanwhile.

"You have shown your loyalty," he said, as he sat down and fell upon the breakfast without hesitation. "I propose to trust you entirely."

Her eyes lighted, but her face remained impassive in spite of this evidence of his confidence.

"This change in the plans of the Union Army renders it imperative that I go back to General Jackson without delay. At the same time word must be

carried to General Fulkerson of the situation, and it must be suggested to him that he advance his brigade, follow the route of the Union Army and attack them so soon as he gets in touch. General Jackson is advancing down the valley and he ought to meet the Federals by eight o'clock. It is now five. He will hold them in play until Fulkerson can join, and as the Yanks do not expect him we ought to win without difficulty. But Fulkerson must be notified. Is there anyone to take that message?"

"Tom," said the girl.

"Good! Get me pen, ink and paper, please."

"They are there in my desk."

He was all business at once. He rushed to the desk and wrote out a brief, concise statement of the position and plans of the enemy. He inclosed the original order from General Jackson as a credential, and stated that he had gone back to warn Jackson. Then he suggested that General Fulkerson advance immediately and attack the Union Army in the rear. He signed it with his full name and rank and inclosed both papers in an envelope.

"I wish you would send Tom to me," he said to the girl, who had been watching him intently.

"I will get him at once."

In five minutes she returned with the startling news that Tom was gone. Her father was in a fume of anger. The servants had just brought him a note which the boy had left in his room, in which he wrote that he was tired of doing nothing and had gone south to join the Confederate Army.

"My Heaven!" exclaimed Herrick, "what shall I do?"

"I will take the message to General Fulkerson myself," she said instantly.

"You!"

"Certainly. I know every foot of the way as well as Tom. I will avoid both roads if necessary and will ride across the fields. But you will have to leave me Whitefoot. You can take any other horse in the stable."

"Of course."

"Give me the papers," continued the girl, slipping them into the bosom of her dress; "I will go the instant the soldiers leave, and now it is time for you to escape. They are all in the dining-room. Do you know the way?"

"Perfectly."

"The back stairs, the kitchen and the stable."

"I understand. Will you forgive——"

"Never!"

"Well, whether you do or not, I love you and shall always love you."

"Did you love me before you knew I had decided for the South?"

"I have loved you since I was fool enough to leave you. When you see your brother again——"

"Is he well?"

"Very well. Ask him to tell you what I said to him just before I started on this journey. That will prove to you my heart. You will forgive me now?"

"No, I will not," answered the woman. But he had some comfort in that she did not repeat that word, "Never."

"Will you shake hands with me?"

"You must go quickly if you would escape," she said, leaving his question unanswered. She had just saved his life and Jackson's army, yet she would not take his hand! He looked at her wistfully for a second, turned and left the room. She sank down on a chair, her hand pressed to her heart. So he loved her after all!

"He loves me!" she gasped. "He loves me, thank God!"

The crackle of the papers in her dress awakened her to her duty. She instantly arose and made her preparations for the journey.

Herrick made his way to the kitchen without difficulty. Swearing the astonished old mammy, who had known him from boyhood, to eternal secrecy, he left the house, gained the barn unobserved, saddled one of the best horses in the stable, galloped across the fields, broke into the main road and dashed away for Jackson's camp without being detected.

CHAPTER V

A SURPRISE OF A SURPRISE

It was about eight in the morning when Herrick ran slap into the picket of the advance guard of Jackson's division. He had ridden the horse he had taken from Greenaway Court to death. The gallant animal fell breathing his last as he met the picket.

"A horse, for God's sake!" he cried; "I have word for the general. The Union Army is approaching. They can't be half an hour behind me."

"Who is it?"

"Herrick, of the First Virginia Cavalry."

"Give him a horse, some one," cried the captain of the advance guard, who fortunately recognized Herrick.

"I suggest that you deploy your men, Captain, and advance cautiously," he said, mounting the troop horse that was proffered him. Then he was gone.

General Jackson rode with the advance. He was astonished beyond measure to see a hatless, muddy, white-faced figure dashing furiously toward him. Checking his horse with a powerful wrench that threw him on his haunches, Herrick gasped out his message.

"General Jackson," he said, "the enemy has disregarded General Fulkerson's position. They are

advancing in force along this road to crush you. They should be here in less than an hour. I had difficulty in passing their pickets."

"We'll give them a little surprise when they come," said Jackson, promptly. "Thanks to you, sir."

He turned and spoke briefly to his staff. In a moment they were scattering in every direction. The gray-clad ranks deployed, guns were rushed to the front, heavy lines of skirmishers were thrown forward. In the twinkling of an eye the easy marching column resolved itself into a stern battle line.

"Now," said the general, "we are ready for them."

The place happened to be a very good defensive position on the slope of a hill.

"You must always count upon a change in the plans of an enemy," he continued; "instead of surprising the Federals we are to fight for our lives, it seems. You have done well, Captain Herrick. I suppose you didn't see General Fulkerson?"

"No, sir. My horse was killed. I ran into a squadron of Union troops and took refuge in a house."

"Whose house?"

"Greenaway Court, sir."

"What! Colonel Trent's house?"

"Yes, sir."

"I thought he was a Northern sympathizer."

"He is for the Union, sir."

"From whom did you learn this news?"

"I would rather not tell, sir, but the information is authentic."

"You didn't go to General Fulkerson, then?"

"No, sir. I thought it better to return here."

"Certainly you chose the wiser course, but I wish that I could get word to Fulkerson."

"I attended to that, sir. One of the members of the household agreed to carry it."

"Yes, but the dispatch will be useless now."

"I know that, sir, but I took the liberty of adding a note of my own, telling of the movement of the Federal troops and suggesting, as representing you—I trust I was not presumptuous, sir?"

"Go on!" snapped the general.

"That General Fulkerson march immediately and fall on the rear of the Union Army while you held it in play."

The general, who was a sad, rather melancholy-faced man, gave one of his rare smiles, then he broke into a quiet laugh.

"Young sir," he said, "you have the instincts of a great captain. I will see what can be done for you after we have won the day. Meanwhile I desire to have it known that you have my full approval and commendation for your most soldierly action."

"Thank you, sir," said the delighted Herrick.

Praise from Stonewall Jackson was praise indeed.

"Major Herrick, you will remain on my staff during the engagement," continued the commander, with emphasis on the new title.

"Yes, General; thank you, sir."

"By the way, who was the person who took the message?"

"I will tell you, General," said the young man, impetuously. "But you must not mention it to anyone."

"You may depend upon me, sir."

"It was a woman."

"What!"

"Miss Trent."

"The colonel's daughter?"

"Yes, General."

"Doesn't she share her father's opinions?"

"No, sir. She is loyal to the South."

"Will she get through?"

"I think she will, sir."

There was a sudden snapping sound of far-off rifle fire away to the front under the trees, a cheer, then a yell, then the full roar of battle, mingled with the thunder of cannon.

"They are at it already," said Jackson, his eyes flashing in spite of his composed demeanor. "Well, we'll beat them this time. Your plan was as good as mine."

CHAPTER VI

THE COLONEL'S GUESTS

"Dick," said Hugh Herrick, "we can get across the mountains just as easily and as quickly by going through the next gap, five miles down, as we can by taking this road."

"We can," assented Major Trent, with a smile and a nod, looking shrewdly at his young colonel.

"And we'll have the advantage of five miles more of good road and good pasture down the valley before we strike into the mountains."

"Your conclusions, Herrick, are logical and indisputable."

"Therefore, I think we'll take the lower gap."

"That road that turns eastward a mile or two above Greenaway Court?"

"Yes, it does," answered Herrick, blushing under the bronze of his two years of campaigning. "Dick, don't you want to stop there and——"

"No."

"But your father——"

"Do you remember how he drove me away? He must send for me before I go to him again," answered Trent, determinedly.

"Rosalie, then?"

"I should love to see her, but not while she sides with father."

"Well, I'm not such a fool as you are, Dick. I'm going to Greenaway Court; will you look after the command? I shan't be gone long. It's a good ten miles from here, and I'll gallop on ahead and rejoin you when you turn through the gap. Bring up the men leisurely—as we are going now—and don't overdrive the cattle. There are no Yanks north of us, and I don't believe there are any south, either."

"It's risky, Hugh," answered Major Trent; "you're apt to run across a troop of Northern cavalry anywhere, and we shouldn't like to lose you."

"Oh, I have no fear. Unlucky in love, lucky in war, you know. Besides, if I don't join you within the hour, you can send a detachment down to look after me."

"All right," answered Trent. "How many men will you take with you?"

"Only one."

"Who will that be?"

"Tom."

"That's good of you, Herrick," rejoined the major, "the boy will appreciate it. I wish I could see my way clear, but——"

"You know, Trent, one of us would have to stay with the regiment," interrupted Herrick, fearful lest his subordinate should change his mind.

"I see. You think a lover's claim is paramount to a brother's?"

"Of course. Don't you?" laughed the young colonel.

"Well, there's no necessity to enter into that phase of it to-day."

"No, I suppose not. Sergeant Trent!" called out Herrick, turning his head.

The young file closer, riding with the first troop, spurred his horse out of line and trotted up to his colonel's side, saluting.

"Sir?"

"You will ride with me as my orderly for the next hour or two. Good-by, Major," said the colonel. "Look out for things generally."

Major Trent saluted; the colonel spoke to his horse. Followed by the boy, he broke into a swift canter, which soon left the regiment far behind.

It was early in '63. A year had elapsed since that memorable meeting between Herrick and the woman he loved at Greenaway Court. Although Jackson had but barely held his own in the battle, in which he would have been overwhelmed had it not been for Herrick's resourceful dash and for Rosalie's ride to General Fulkerson's camp, he had finally succeeded by vigorous campaigning in clearing the Federals out of the lower part of the valley, and then had withdrawn across the mountains to join his forces with the Army of Northern Virginia, under Lee, then confronting Hooker and the Army of the Potomac along the Rappahannock. Consequently, Herrick, engrossed in his duties, had not seen Rosalie Trent since that eventful morning.

He had been promoted to a majority, and finally to a colonelcy, in his regiment in the interim, and the beginning of '63 found him back once more in the valley. His regiment had been detailed to escort a wagon train of supplies and several huge droves of

cattle which the Confederate Government had assembled and wished to use in provisioning the army. Secrecy and celerity, so far as was compatible with the size of his convoy, were required. Hence the selection of Herrick, whose thorough knowledge of the country was well known in the army.

The whole expedition had been managed perfectly. Without alarming the Federal garrisons at Harper's Ferry, and the northern end of the valley, forage had been gathered, a wagon train assembled, and a great herd of cattle put in motion.

There were no Union troops down the valley save wandering bodies of cavalry, some of them made up of masterless men, the refuse of both armies whom the troublous times permitted to gather in bands and ravage indiscriminately for their own aggrandizement.

Here and there a little party of bold troopers, carrying dispatches or scouting, might be met with, but not in force sufficiently great to cause the convoy any grave anxiety.

Nevertheless, Herrick had used as much vigilance as he could, and had moved as rapidly as if he had been apprehensive of immediate attack. So soon as he crossed the mountains, he would be in his own territory and very much safer with regard to possible pursuit. There were Confederate detachments all along the country between the mountains and Lee's camp, and they all had orders to look out for and succor Herrick's expedition in case of necessity.

Having arrived in the vicinity of Greenaway Court, Herrick could not resist the temptation for a

quick dash to that delectable spot in the hope of seeing the woman he adored. There was little danger to be apprehended, although there was, of course, always risk to a solitary officer in any part of the country at that time. However, he concluded to run the risk.

Perhaps if Herrick had been trained as a regular soldier he would have looked at the matter differently. Although he had done efficient and splendid service, and now commanded one of the best regiments of cavalry in the South, there was a great deal of the independence of a volunteer about him, as there was about the bulk of the armies on either side.

Strictly speaking, he had no right to involve himself in risks of any sort unless they were demanded by military exigencies. He should have stayed with his regiment, but the fact remains that he did not. Love was his excuse—a poor one, but it served.

"Come up here, Tom," said the young man, turning his head, at the same time checking the pace of his horse, so soon as they were out of sight of the regiment and the convoy toiling along the dusty road.

The boy, who had joined Herrick's command, had been recently made sergeant. He needed no further invitation. In a few moments both horses were loping along side by side.

"We'll sink rank for a little while, youngster," said Herrick, kindly, although that was easier said than done.

"All right, Colonel," answered the other.

"I suppose you're anxious to know where we are going?"

"I have an idea."

"Where?"

"Home! To Greenaway Court."

"You're right," Herrick laughed, aloud, in sheer boyishness.

"I wonder if they—are both—there?" asked the young sergeant.

"Can't tell," returned Herrick; "we can only try and see. They may have gone north, of course. Your father has some property in Philadelphia, I believe. Hasn't he?"

"He did have before the war, but what he has now I don't know."

"Well, he may have gone there."

"I don't believe that is likely," said Tom. "Although he's for the Federal Union, he loves Virginia as much as we all do, and I don't believe he would live anywhere else."

"That's true. Well, we can't linger in this way. If we are to cover the distance and get back to join the command we'll have to push ahead."

He set the example by urging his horse to a greater speed, while the boyish looking sergeant dropped slightly behind, recognizing that the condescension of his superior had ceased to be operative, and followed him at a rapid gallop. They covered the distance in a short time, although it seemed to both a very long period before they finally drew rein at the gate of the court.

The valley even then was full of ruined houses, ravaged plantations and devastated farms, but fortune had been kind to Colonel Trent hitherto. His

well-known Union sympathies, the obloquy which had been heaped upon him by his friends and neighbors, had served to keep the Union soldiers from molesting him.

On the other hand, Stonewall Jackson had given strict orders after Rosalie's achievement that the Trent property was to be respected by every one, under pain of death. Consequently the old house and its surroundings looked as peaceful and as prosperous as they had in the olden days before the besom of war swept the valley.

There was no one visible except a man on horseback, who had preceded them through the gate, and who, apparently, was just delivering a letter to Colonel Trent, who sat, well wrapped up, on the porch in the sunshine of the cool but pleasant morning. The colonel was reading the letter, and did not at first observe the advent of the others, although both had recognized him.

After a little hesitation the two Confederates rode through the gate. The man who had preceded them looked around and caught sight of them. He spoke a hasty word to the colonel, mounted instantly in obedience to a signal, and rode his horse around the house and so away.

The colonel raised his eyes from the letter and stared at the two hated uniforms of gray. As they approached nearer he recognized the horsemen as his whilom friend and his recalcitrant younger son. A dull red mounted to his withered cheeks. He struggled to his feet and thrust out a repellant hand, the hand that held the letter. As his glance fell upon

this letter a grim smile spread over his face. He sank back in his chair with the letter in his hand.

The two approached him with something of the air of culprits. When they reached the foot of the flight of steps leading up to the broad gallery surrounding the house Herrick dismounted, threw the bridle reins to his companion, and directed him to tie the horses and follow. Then he mounted the steps, hat in hand. Not a word had the old colonel said. It was Herrick who broke the silence.

"Colonel Trent," he began, "being in the vicinity I—I—took the liberty of old acquaintanceship to call and pay my respects to—to you, sir."

"Umph!" snorted the old man.

"Thinking you might be glad to see him, I brought along Sergeant Trent—Tom, you know, Colonel." He pointed to the boy, who had just rejoined him. "Your son."

The colonel shook his head.

"No son of mine wears that uniform," he retorted, grimly.

"We needn't go into that, sir," continued the young man. "I recognize your right to think as you do, to differ from me. Perhaps you will admit that I have a right——"

"I will not admit the right of any man to rebel against the United States."

"But Virginia, sir——"

"I love Virginia, but she is only a part of the country I love better, sir. However"—the colonel's eye fell upon the letter in his hand, and once more he temporized—"I desire to say to you that you are

here uninvited—unwelcome. That you are not to consider yourselves in any way my guests."

"You order me away, sir?" queried Herrick, hotly.

"Oh, as to that," said the colonel, coolly, "I have nothing to say. You are here. You are stronger than I. I presume you will stay as long as you like. If there is anything in the vicinity you wish, of course you will help yourself."

"You know, sir," burst out the young colonel, impetuously, "that General Jackson gave strict orders that no Confederate soldier was to molest you in any way."

"That for the orders of General Jackson!" snapped out Colonel Trent. "I am protected by the United States. The Confederacy can molest me at its pleasure, but it will be at its peril, also!"

Herrick looked helplessly at the indomitable old man. Then he stared anxiously through the open door into the house. He hadn't come there to see Colonel Trent. His eyes searched the recesses of the hall, and such of the rooms as he could see into, with eager gaze. There was no sign of the woman he loved.

Clearly nothing was to be gained by waiting, unless he wished to affront the colonel by entering the house and searching for her. Yet he lingered, watched keenly by the elder man. Finally he turned on his heel, lifting his hand in salute, and prepared to descend to the walk.

"If you please, Colonel Herrick," began young Tom, who had been a silent but nervous spectator of the scene. "I should like to ask a question."

Herrick nodded.

"Father——" began the boy.

The colonel, unable to stamp his foot, snapped his finger.

"Not that!"

"Colonel Richard Trent," said the sergeant, with some of his father's fire and spirit, "if you prefer that better, I ask to see my sister, Rosalie."

"You have no father and, therefore, no sister."

"For God's sake, sir," interrupted Herrick, "let the boy see his sister!"

"Do you plead for him or for yourself, sir?" sneered the old man.

"For both of us," admitted Herrick. "I don't hesitate to say that I love her."

"You hesitated once."

"I was a fool! When I saw her last year——"

"Last year? What do you mean, sir?"

"Nothing," instantly returned the young man, conscious that he had betrayed himself, and resolved to let nothing more escape him.

"Rosalie!" cried Colonel Trent, lifting his voice. "This way, please."

There was a movement in the room immediately behind the colonel. Herrick, listening with a keen alertness, heard a footfall. He would have recognized that sound among a thousand—he thought. A moment later a young woman came through the door.

"You called me, father?" she asked, stepping to his side.

She did not look at Herrick. At least, not after she came out on the porch. She had been peering at

him through the slats of the Venetian blinds with an eager, passionate gaze, as if she never wished to lose sight of him. In the open it was different.

"Do you see this—gentleman?" continued her father, waving his hand.

At that Rosalie turned and faced Herrick. A warm color rose in her pale face. Her hand clenched in spite of herself. She hoped he did not mark the rapid rise and fall of her bosom.

"I see him, father," a little tremble in her voice, in spite of her effort at self-control.

"It is Hugh Herrick. You used to know him."

"Yes, sir."

"You used to love him."

"Did you call me out here to discuss the past, sir?" she returned, turning upon him indignantly.

"Not the remote past, my dear, but I gather from something the young man said that you had met last year. Will you please state when and where?"

The girl bit her lip. Herrick came to her rescue. He must extricate her from her predicament at whatever cost.

"I either expressed myself very badly, sir, or you misunderstood me," he began.

"I didn't misunderstand you."

"At any rate, I meant two years ago. I haven't —seen—Miss Trent—since that day at Staunton."

He was not a good liar, and the color flamed in his own face at this perversion of the truth. He felt, however, that, as a gentleman and a man of honor, there was nothing else to be done. The girl had sacrificed much in order to save him that day. She had

also sacrificed much in order to remain with her crippled but indomitable father.

It was her desire to continue with him—Herrick honored her for it. If her father knew she had assisted him to escape, and that it was through her that the plans of the Union general for crushing General Jackson had been brought to naught, the consequences would be terrible. He would assuredly drive her from her home as he had driven the other children.

But the old colonel's suspicions had been thoroughly roused, and they were not quieted by the explanation he had received. He turned again to his daughter.

"Is this true?"

"Father," said the girl, "every relationship between Captain Herrick and me——"

"Colonel Herrick now," mocked her father.

"Colonel Herrick, then, has been broken off, but you surely do not expect me to insult a former acquaintance and—friend, by requiring a corroboration of his statement from me?"

This was, in effect, a confirmation of Herrick's untruth, but it was not quite so bad, in Rosalie's mind, as a deliberate falsehood would have been. The colonel, who was a very keen old man, was about to comment sarcastically upon the obvious situation, when his eye fell upon the letter in his hand. As before, something caused him to restrain himself. He stared at the young couple and said nothing. Herrick was emboldened by his silence.

"Miss Trent," he began, "Miss Rosalie, if you will permit me, when we parted that day—in short,

we parted in Staunton in anger. I loved you then —I had not left you before I would have given worlds to unsay what I had said. I now wish to assure you and reassure you that my feelings toward you have not changed—yes, they have been changed. I care more for you "—it was very hard to say this under the scrutiny of the mocking old colonel and with young Tom as an auditor also, but Herrick persisted—"more for you than I did before—I—I——"

"When I went with my father, Colonel—Hugh," she said, involuntarily dropping the title, "I—I resolved to free myself from such ties—oh, let us say no more about it! Tom!" She turned toward him and extended her arms. The next moment she was kissing the boy vehemently. "How handsome you look in your uniform!" she cried, glad of an opportunity for this spontaneous and natural expression of her surcharged emotions.

Herrick envied the boy every pressure of those sweet lips, which he received so lightly.

"Father," said the girl, at last, "our guests——"

"Stop!" cried the colonel. "No guests of mine."

"These gentlemen, then "—the colonel looked as if he would like to question this statement also—"have ridden far, and are hungry, and, if I know soldiers, are thirsty also. I shall get them something to eat and drink."

"Please yourself," sneered the old man, with unusual complaisance.

"Come," said the young woman, and the two soldiers followed her into the house.

CHAPTER VII

BATTLE AND CONFESSION

Rosalie was glad and happy at the meeting; delighted to see her brother, happiest, above all, to see her lover, to remember what Herrick had said standing on the porch. Although she stubbornly resolved not to allow him to suspect the state of her feelings —until at least this war was over—she rejoiced to know that he was still faithful to her. However, he may have bungled over the tergiversation to the colonel, truth inhabited his voice when he had spoken to her.

She led the two into the great dining-room, and the larder was ransacked for their benefit. Living on soldiers' fare so long, they were hungry for the good things of life, and were soon sitting down to the unwonted luxury of dainty napery, delicate china, polished silver, loaded with delectable dainties.

Outside, the colonel sat on the porch looking down the road. He had observed some time before a little column of dust coming up the valley, and now it was quite near—near enough for him to see that it was a troop of Federal cavalry. The officer in command waved his hat at the colonel as he turned into the gate.

The old man had watched the approach of these

troopers with growing complacency. The letter in his hand was a note from that very officer saying that he would arrive at Greenaway Court in less than an hour, and asking that he might get a dinner and some forage for his horses—for which, of course, he offered to pay in United States greenbacks.

So soon as Herrick and his own son had ridden into the yard, the colonel had conceived a plan to detain them until the arrival of this squadron, by which they would be captured.

He had steadily refused to consider them as his guests. He had warned them to go away. His conscience, therefore, was entirely clear. Yet—not quite. He had not exactly forbidden them to enter the house, they were in his home, in his dining-room, partaking of his hospitality vicariously tendered by his daughter. And he was about to allow them to be captured.

Union or no Union, he realized he could not stand for that! But he found it out too late!

It was a long distance from the gate to the house, and the officer halted while his men defiled into the yard. The colonel had, perhaps, two minutes. He rose to his feet and, with astonishing agility for one so helpless, shambled through the hall and into the dining-room.

"There is a troop of Federal cavalry coming up the drive," he exclaimed. "I intended to allow them to capture you—but—well—I've changed my mind. Hide or fly, as you please."

"In here," cried Rosalie, promptly, throwing open the door of the pantry. "Perhaps you can get out back, or——"

"It's useless," returned Herrick, calmly—he had not moved. "You forget that our horses are tied to the end of the porch. They will betray our presence. We could not escape across the fields, and if they suspected you of harboring or concealing us they would burn down your house, Colonel."

"They wouldn't dare!" said the colonel, furiously angry over the whole situation, for which he himself had largely been responsible.

Further remarks were interrupted by the tread of many feet upon the porch, the sharp tap of a saber against the door. At the same time a buzz of excited voices indicated that the horses of the Confederates had been discovered. The old colonel stepped into the hall at once.

"Colonel Trent?" asked the Union officer.

"Captain Irving?" returned the colonel, looking up from the note.

"The same, sir."

"I received your note, sir. You are very welcome. I shall do my best to entertain you."

"Beg pardon, Colonel Trent, but I must know first the meaning of those horses at the end of the porch. Those are Confederate saddlebags and blankets. To whom do they belong?"

"To me," answered Herrick, coolly, stepping out into the hall.

"And who are you?"

"Colonel Hugh Herrick, of the Black Horse Cavalry, the First Virginia."

"Your sword, sir. You are my prisoner."

"Father," cried Rosalie, stepping between the

Union officer and her lover. "You cannot permit this! You will not allow——"

"Sir," said Colonel Trent, "I am a Union man, as is well known. Though it may be unbecoming in me to say so, I have suffered much for my sentiments, and am therefore entitled to consideration. You will confer a great favor upon me by refraining from the exercise of your undoubted right to apprehend this gentleman."

"And me, sir," interrupted Tom, ungrammatically, but emphatically.

"Who is this?" asked the Union officer.

"My brother, sir," answered the girl, quickly, "my father's son. Oh, sir, they are not here on warlike business. They came to see—my—my father."

"To see you, sister," interrupted the young sergeant, whereat Rosalie blushed again.

"Very well," she continued, bravely. "To see me. My brother and my——"

"What is Colonel Herrick to you?" thundered her father.

"He was—my—friend."

"For my part I do not hesitate to avow myself her suitor," said Herrick, with equal boldness.

"Whatever it may be," said the colonel, roughly, "it is without my permission, my consent! Nevertheless, these gentlemen are my guests, in a measure. I cannot allow them to suffer as the result of my hospitality."

"I am very sorry, sir. Did you invite them here?" returned Captain Irving, persistently.

"I did not! They came uninvited."

"Did you request them to eat with you?"

"No, sir, my daughter did that." The colonel realized his mistake at once. "Why discuss it further?" he continued. "They are here, and I wish them to go free."

"Impossible, sir."

"What! Impossible?"

"Absolutely! I have heard that Colonel Herrick is in command—or was in command—of a valuable convoy. We were striving to get in touch with that very convoy in the hope of reporting it, so that it might be cut off. Colonel Herrick is a most dangerous man. I would as soon think of giving up my commission as letting him go."

"I tell you you must, sir!"

"Stand aside, sir!" cried Captain Irving, indignant at the colonel's haughty tone, pushing the feeble old man against the wall.

"Ready, Tom!" shouted Herrick, drawing his pistol.

He had no hope, of course, of making a successful fight against the Union soldiers, who now blocked both ends of the hall and surrounded the house. He was playing, however, for time. Like Sister Anne, in the fairy tale, he had been watching the road over which he had come through the window of the dining-room, which he could see from his position by the door. No one in the hall except he could see that road, and it was probable that no one outside noticed, as he did, a cloud of dust coming along it.

He knew that if he did not return, Trent would dispatch a squadron for him, and, although his time

"Sir," she said, "perhaps you will heed a woman's plea."
Page 373.

had not elapsed, he divined that the dust indicated the approach of soldiers coming to help him. If they were in sufficient force all would be well.

He and the sergeant both whipped out their heavy revolvers. Without orders the Federal troopers lifted their carbines. Instinctively Rosalie shrank closer to her lover, as if to protect him. Her movement gave him an opportunity to whisper a word or two in her ear.

"For God's sake, gain us time!"

Not understanding why, but obedient, she addressed herself to the task. She sprang forward with arms outstretched, confronting the Union officer.

"Sir," she said, "perhaps you will heed a woman's plea. For her—her—friend."

There was such a pause before the last word, that it was quite evident what was in her heart.

"Madam," said the Federal captain, compassionately, "believe me, I am grieved to seem discourteous, but there is no help for it. Colonel Herrick must be taken, dead or alive!"

"Not that! Not that!" she cried.

Herrick had been staring up the road. The dust was nearer now. He recognized the gray jackets of his men. He stepped forward swiftly and seized Rosalie by the waist.

"What!" exclaimed the Union officer, in surprise and contempt. "You would shelter yourself behind a woman?"

"I wish to put her in a place of safety," answered Herrick, swinging Rosalie into the dining-room and

out of range of fire. She protested, and would have come back had not her glance also fallen upon the soldiers riding along the road. The first of these had even now turned into the gate of the Hall. So excited were the Union men that they had not kept watch.

"Colonel Herrick," said Captain Irving, "you are outnumbered ten to one. You must see the folly of resistance. I promise you honorable treatment. Yield yourself."

"Never!" cried Herrick.

"By Heaven!" called out Colonel Trent, vainly trying to interfere. The Union captain was upon him in a moment.

"Sit still, sir!" he commanded, forcing him to a sofa. "Men," he cried, "seize these two rebels!"

"The first man who takes a step," cried Herrick, "will get a bullet in him!"

The Union troops being at both ends of the long hall, could not fire upon the two men without imminent danger of hitting one another, and in the face of Herrick's threat, backed by his and Tom's revolvers, they hesitated to advance.

"Men at the back porch there! Stand clear of the entrance!" cried Captain Irving, at once realizing their dilemma.

They were intelligent soldiers, and quick to perceive that he wanted to open the way for the use of firearms. Those at the back promptly retired behind the walls of the house, and stationed themselves on either side of the door out of range.

"Now fire on them!" ordered Irving, at the same

time pulling the trigger of his own revolver. At the words, Herrick, Tom and the troopers opened fire. But the instant the soldiers fired there was a great commotion outside.

The fierce rebel yell rose from the yard. The Confederates there were firing from their saddles. Hurling a volley into the men huddled on the porch at close range, they did fearful execution. The aim of the Federal soldiers was thus disconcerted. Their bullets swept the hall, but none of them touched either the colonel or the sergeant.

The Union troops faced about, those in rear ran around the gallery to the front, and the mêlée became general. Captain Irving divined what had happened. He saw that his men were taken at a disadvantage and hopelessly outnumbered.

He determined to account for Colonel Herrick, anyway. Stepping quickly through the smoke he pointed his revolver straight at him and pulled the trigger. Herrick threw himself backward, fairly into the arms of Rosalie, who at that moment entered the hall. The bullet grazed his chest, glanced off and struck the young sergeant in the shoulder.

The next instant, recovering himself, Herrick sprang forward and seized Captain Irving before he could fire a second shot. The little battle was over.

The Confederate troopers, headed by one of Herrick's most trusted captains, swarmed into the hall. Feeling somewhat faint from loss of blood, Herrick turned over his prisoner to his subordinate and sank down on a chair. Rosalie, who had been ministering to her brother, who assured her that his wound was

not serious, caught sight of her lover's white face. She ran to him instantly, aghast at his appearance.

The old colonel, meanwhile, had struggled to his feet.

"What is this man to you?" he cried, as he saw the anguish with which she bent over Herrick.

"I love him!" answered the girl, boldly, "as I love the South!"

To Herrick the statement was a greater stimulant than anything else could have been. He struggled to his feet; some one handed him a flask. He was soon himself again.

"Thank God for that!" he said. "The day when I can claim you as my own will be the happiest in my life! Now I must go. You came in the nick of time, Captain Page."

"Yes, sir," answered the officer, "and mighty glad that I came, too. Major Trent got to worryin' about you, and he told me to take my troop down here and look you up."

"It was most fortunate," said Herrick. "Meanwhile these prisoners and our own men who can ride will come with us."

"Most of the Yanks are dead, sir," said the Confederate captain. "There are one or two badly wounded. The rest we can mount and take with us."

"Very good. The wounded we will have to leave to your hospitality, Colonel Trent. How many of our men are injured, Captain Page?"

"Two are killed, sir, two or three slightly wounded, and the sergeant yonder."

Herrick walked over to the boy. A brief inspec-

tion showed him that Tom was more severely wounded than he had fancied.

"He can't be moved," he said, "we shall have to leave him here, too. Well, he will be in good hands." He looked at the uncompromising old colonel, then his glance fell upon the young woman. "His sister will care for him."

"I will care for them all," said the girl, eagerly.

"You can get a physician?"

"There is one two miles down the road; he shall be summoned immediately."

"You will see to the burial of the dead?"

"I will see to the burial of our men," cried the colonel.

"And I to ours," resolutely returned his daughter.

"As for you," continued the old man, "the sooner you go the better." He turned to his daughter. "Madam, I do not care to have you here longer. You can go to your friends. I want no more of you."

"Rosalie," began Herrick, hastily, "we——"

"No," said the girl, quietly. "I must stay here. My duty to Tom——"

Colonel Trent struggled to his feet.

"By Heaven!" he said, thickly, "you shall not! I——"

The words died on his lips. He seemed to collapse. The Confederate captain caught him as he fell and gently laid him upon a sofa.

"He has fainted," said the girl. "He is subject to these spells since his fall." She fetched restoratives and applied them at once.

"I hate to leave you," said Herrick, when the old colonel showed signs of reviving. "But I must go. Get the men ready outside," he said to Captain Page.

Rosalie and Herrick were alone for a moment.

"Did you mean what you said just now?" he asked, eagerly. "About loving me and——"

"Yes," answered the girl, bravely. It was impossible for her to conceal it now.

"May God forever bless you!" cried the young man, taking her in his arms. She made a faint resistance, then surrendered herself to his embrace.

"I must go," he said, at last. "If you need me, I will come to you from the ends of the earth!"

"I know," she answered.

"And you will send me word by Tom when he is well?"

"Yes."

"Good-by."

He tore himself from her, and with backward glances stumbled down the hall.

"Your wound!" the girl cried after him.

"It is nothing," he answered. "Merely a scratch. You have cured me. Good-by."

She did not feel at liberty to go to the door to watch them depart. Her father, her brother, the poor men, were waiting for her. Her father had partially recovered. There was a fierce gleam in his eye, and, as she bent over him, he feebly thrust her away and raised a clenched fist—but to that she gave no heed.

CHAPTER VIII

SENT AWAY

"So you turn me out, sir?"

However the colonel may have felt, whatever inward qualms he may have experienced, there was no outward manifestation of his emotions in the directness with which he returned his daughter's indignant gaze.

"You have turned yourself out," he answered, shortly.

"Father!"

"It is true. I swore that I would have no fellowship with those who were the enemies of my country in this fratricidal war. You knew it and——"

"Why should that separate me from you when you need me so much?"

"Am I a child," cried the colonel, wrathfully, "that I require a nurse?"

"You are ill, feeble, old——"

"No more of that! I am abundantly able to look after myself with the assistance of the servants. I will have no traitors to the United States in my house!"

He struck the arm of his chair vehemently with his old hand after he had spoken.

"Father, think," she pleaded. "I am all that is

left you. You drove Richard away and then Tom, and now—— I can't leave you!" She sank down on her knees beside him, a beautiful picture of affection and dismay, as even he admitted in his heart. "What difference does it make what I believe, where my allegiance is given?" she went on. "My duty is with you here. Don't send me away! I can't bear to leave you alone!"

"Why didn't you remain true to me, then? Why did you cast your lot in with these cursed rebels?"

"Can I help that?" returned the girl, indignantly. "I am not a child, either, I must think for myself. I love Virginia as I love the South."

"Are you sure it isn't love for a Virginian that moves you?" queried her father, sarcastically.

"For shame, father! I refused once to go with him and stayed with you."

"Would you do it again?"

"Refuse him? No! Stay with you? Yes!"

"I will have no divided allegiance," cried the old man. "Besides, you work harm to my cause. My sympathies, my position, are well known. Old, feeble and broken as I am, a great many things pass through my hands now. I cannot have a—a—spy around."

"Oh!" protested the girl, shrinking from the cruel accusation, "how can you apply such a word to me?"

"Because you deserve it! Didn't you reveal that pretty little plan we had for crushing that psalm-singing Puritan, General Jackson, last year? Answer me!" he insisted, as his daughter rose to her feet and stood before him.

"Yes, I did."

"I knew it! I guessed as much. In some way it was through Herrick, wasn't it?"

"It was." She had flung restraint and constraint to the winds and spoke boldly, with a singular likeness to her father's energy. "He came here to see me."

"Did you summon him?"

"No, he came unknown to me, uninvited——"

"But not unwelcome?" he sneered.

"Is a girl's lover ever unwelcome?" she retorted, defiantly. "I saved him from capture. I overheard what was planned and I told him. I had warned you that I would, and you gave me permission to find out whatever I could, sir."

"I didn't know you were so smart," commented the old man, grimly.

"You should remember that I am your daughter."

"True!" he laughed—but mirthlessly. "Proceed."

"I told Hugh the plan. He rode back and warned Jackson."

"And you? What did you do?"

"I rode up to General Fulkerson's headquarters."

"And insured his coöperation, I suppose?"

"Yes, and I am glad of it!"

"Preposterous! Amazing!" cried the old man, staring at her in angry astonishment. "I never dreamed—— Out of here—at once! Both my boys and—now—you! Well?"

He tapped nervously on the arm of his chair.

"Where shall I go, sir?" asked his daughter.

"You are a woman," returned the colonel, after thinking deeply for a little space. "You cannot shift for yourself as men do, else I have no doubt you would go trapesing after the rebel army."

The girl started, opened her lips to speak, then checked herself.

"We have relatives in Philadelphia," her father continued. "I have property there, you know. I shall send you there."

"Send me to the North, sir?"

"Certainly."

"I shall not go one step in that direction!"

"Where then, pray?"

"To my grandmother, in Richmond."

"As you will," returned the colonel, indifferently. He drew from his pocket a large, old-fashioned purse and emptied its contents into his left hand, which he extended toward her. "Here are two hundred and fifty dollars in good, honest money, United States gold—no Confederate trash, that! You can have it, and it should suffice for your journey. You can go up to Harper's Ferry and take the railroad to Washington. I will give you a letter to a friend of mine there, and through that means you can doubtless obtain a pass to Richmond. As to your support when you get there——"

"Give yourself no further concern as to that, sir," interrupted the girl, proudly. "I shall have a home with my grandmother, and I doubt not that I can provide for all my other needs. There will be work for the women of the South to do, and I intend to do it."

"Very well," said the colonel, coldly. "If you need anything and will communicate with me I will relieve you."

"I shall not go by way of Harper's Ferry, either!"

"Why not?"

"I do not wish to go near the North, I do not intend to be beholden to the Northern people for anything! I shall go straight across the mountains on horseback until I strike the railroad, which will take me direct to Richmond."

"Alone?"

"Tom will be with me. He is quite recovered now. And if I were alone I have nothing to fear from the Southern soldier."

"As you please," said her father, shortly. "And now, as this interview has greatly tired me, I beg you to excuse me from further discussion."

"Father," implored the girl, "is that all? You won't send me away without your blessing?"

"I wish you well personally," said the indomitable old man, "but I can have no fellowship with rebels and traitors, especially in my own household. Should you change your opinion I shall be glad to—ah—talk with you again. Good-by."

Rosalie Trent stood and looked at her father for a brief space. She wavered toward him finally with outstretched arms, but there was something in the stark look of that iron countenance that repelled her. A sob choked further utterance. Her hands dropped. She turned away and left the room. Outside the door her brother was waiting for her. He was choking with indignation.

"Oh!" he exclaimed, as his sister, white-faced and sorrowful, came out of the library and into the hall, "if he were not my father I think I'd——"

"Hush, Tom! He is our father—don't say a word," she remonstrated, gently.

"Are you ready to go, Rosalie?" he asked at last, mastering his resentment for the moment.

"I shall be in a few moments. Do you get the horses and bring them around while I make my preparations."

"You won't be able to take much in the way of clothes, you know."

"I shall not attempt anything but a change of linen, another dress and a few necessaries which can be put in your saddlebags and my portmanteau, and strapped on the horses' backs."

"All right. Don't be long, I'm anxious to get away."

His sister turned and slowly ascended the stairs. Sergeant Tom waited until she had disappeared above, and then he resolutely opened the door and unceremoniously stepped into the presence of his father.

"I want to say to you, sir," he began—somewhat nervously it must be confessed—"with all due respect to you as my father, that you are acting like a—a brute, sir, in sending my sister away!"

"Have you finished, sir?" asked the surprised colonel.

"Yes, I have," returned the boy, indignantly standing very erect. He was furiously angry, but there was some force in the old figure, frail and weak

as it was in the chair before him, that restrained him from further aggression. "I haven't said all that I would like to say either," he constrained himself to add.

"I presume not," began the colonel, with infinite sarcasm. "I now have a vivid illustration of the consequences of rebellion brought home personally to me as never before. Virginia strives to cut the throat of the United States. My son, a mere boy"—Sergeant Tom withered under the cutting contempt in his father's voice and manner—"addresses such language to me, his father, as no gentleman could hear unmoved if he possessed the power to resent it. By heavens, sir!" thundered the old man, suddenly, "were I in my natural strength I'd flog you to your nursery!" This was stretching it slightly, as Sergeant Tom stood six feet in his stockings, and was a remarkably well developed youngster for sixteen years of age. "As it is," continued the colonel, recovering himself with difficulty, "I have still one resource."

"What is that?" faltered the boy, as the old man paused.

"The privilege and the pleasure of showing you the door!"

His gesture was magnificent. Sergeant Tom ground his teeth together impotently, stamped his feet irresolutely, and finally turned on his heel and bolted impetuously from the room. The old man smiled rather grimly at this exit.

"The lad has pluck," he muttered; "so has the girl. Oh, God, if it had only been turned in another

direction! No traitors in my house!" he murmured. "Never!"

His head sank forward on his hand. He sat silent, listening, waiting. Presently he heard his daughter's step descending the stair. She paused at the door of the library, but did not enter. He had steeled his heart against her, yet in spite of himself he half hoped that she would come in, and he was correspondingly disappointed when she did not. After her pause there he heard her go out on the porch.

The horses were brought around. For a little space they were busy arranging matters, putting the saddlebags in place, and so forth, and then Sergeant Tom mounted Rosalie on Whitefoot. Then he got into his own saddle. There was another pause, and they turned slowly away.

The colonel could follow the scene in his mind. Presently the riders spoke to their horses and moved down the walk.

The old man seized his crutches—he had constant need of them since the last attack—painfully adjusted them, struggled to his feet and stepped toward the window. He turned the slats in the Venetian blinds and stared after the two.

They stopped when they reached the gate and both looked back at the house long and earnestly. The unseen observer saw his daughter's head droop finally. She let the reins fall on her horse's neck and put her head in her hands. She was weeping.

There was a suspicious moisture in the eyes of the old man also. He pressed his lips together, and when they disappeared down the road he turned and

stumped back to his chair and sank down in it, a huddled heap. A very lonely, desolate, feeble-looking old figure! If he had been honest with himself he would have admitted at that moment that he wished she would come back.

CHAPTER IX

ROSALIE JOINS THE REGIMENT

On the afternoon of May 1st, a week later, Sergeant Tom and his sister were riding along a mountain road toward the little village of Chancellorsville. The weather had been delightfully pleasant. They found when they crossed the mountains that the train service was inconvenient, and Rosalie herself had suggested that they proceed to Richmond on horseback. They knew that the Union forces were to the north of them. They were far enough south to be covered by Confederate detachments, which were strung along between the Rappahannock and the mountains, on the watch for any movement of the Union army.

The chance suggestion that her father had given her had developed into a fixed purpose in the girl's mind. She wanted to see her brother Richard, whom she had not seen since that day at Staunton, three years ago. She wanted to gratify Tom's ardent desire to join his regiment, and more than all she wanted to see Hugh Herrick, who would be with Jackson's corps of Lee's army.

Women often visited the armies on either side when they were not engaged in actual battle. There was no impropriety in her going with one brother to see another brother. She could easily get to Rich-

mond from the army. Her brothers and Hugh Herrick would attend to that.

As they moved toward Chancellorsville, beyond which lay the headquarters of the Army of Northern Virginia, they had heard rumors of impending manœuvres; scattered detachments passed them from time to time on the way to the front, summoned there to meet the threatened invasion of the Army of the Potomac under Hooker. The main roads were soon filled with troops, cavalry, infantry, artillery, pack trains, all hurrying eastward.

This put a somewhat different face upon the situation, but it was too late for them to make a change in their plans, and Tom, to whom the decision was largely left, concluded to press on. He was burning with anxiety to get to the army, and perhaps thought less of Rosalie's position than he would have done under other circumstances.

One thing they could do. They could leave the highroads and take bridle paths over the mountains, saving many a mile by short cuts, and avoiding the discomfort of scrutiny and inquiry to which they were subjected by every detachment of soldiers. They stopped at night at a mountain cabin, and the next morning resumed their journey.

Heavy firing had been heard the day before in front, and the noise of battle and all the rumor and excitement that center around a great engagement were in the air. Rosalie scarcely knew what to do. She could not stay where she was; so she yielded to her brother's urging that it would do no harm for them to push on to the front.

Where they were in the mountains everything was calm and peaceful, as if war had not been dreamed of; but beneath the twitter of the birds, the soft sigh of the wind of the fresh spring day, coming through the pines, they could hear the muttered diapason of distant cannonading.

The road, a mere bridle path, wandered in and out among the hills, crooked and tortuous, so they could see little on either side. Its general direction, however, was eastward, and they knew it would bring them eventually to their goal, which was the village of Chancellorsville.

Coming around the side of the hill, they ran almost into the arms of a body of horsemen on a cross-road. They were in full view of the oncoming troops. To run away was out of the question. There was a great cloud of dust before the approaching soldiers, who seemed to be several hundred strong, and it was not easy to distinguish at a first glance what they were. Tom halted instinctively, drew out his revolver and interposed between his sister and the others. A second glance, however, told him that the uniforms were gray.

"They wear our uniforms," he said, looking keenly. "They are our men!" He stared intently at them. "It's our regiment!" He thrust back his pistol, took off his hat and waved it in the air, yelling frantically.

Two or three horsemen detached themselves from the mass and galloped toward the two. The remainder of the soldiers were trotting rapidly along the road.

"Don't you see?" cried Tom. "It's the colonel! And Dick is with him!"

Yes, Rosalie saw. At least, she saw Herrick, and for the moment she saw no one else. He was her lover, and her eyes had never seen a picture that filled them better—grimy, dusty, dirty, travel-stained as he was. A second glance and she identified her brother Richard in much the same condition.

"Great Powers!" cried Herrick, reining in his horse. "Rosalie! You here!"

He would have taken her in his arms had it not been for the curious gaze of the men of the regiment trotting past a short distance below them. Richard Trent had no such scruples, however. He doffed his hat and kissed his sister.

"I have to report for duty, sir," said Sergeant Tom to the colonel.

"Are you all right?"

"All right now, sir."

"Very good. Fall in with your troop," answered the colonel, mechanically. "Now, Rosalie?"

"Father has turned us off—me rather," faltered the girl. "He drove me out of the house."

Herrick started and then smote the palms of his hands indignantly together, as if he could not trust himself to speak upon such a subject. Richard Trent bit his lip.

"You were going?" he asked of his sister.

"To Richmond. Father wanted to send me to Philadelphia, but I—I—wouldn't go to the North," she faltered again.

"Brave girl!" cried her lover, and she flushed under his hearty praise.

"I said I would go across the mountains and take a train there, and then it was so pleasant Tom and I just rode along. I—I wanted to see—you—Richard."

"And me? Don't forget me!" urged Herrick, jealously.

"And you, too," answered the girl, looking at him bravely with her eyes shining.

"Thank God!"

"But what are we going to do with her, Herrick?" asked Major Trent.

"I don't know," answered the colonel, in great bewilderment. "I had thought of nothing else in the joy of meeting you again, Rosalie."

"Where are you going?" asked the girl.

"We are riding around the flank of the Union army. Howard's corps, I believe. It's in the air. We're trying to find Jackson to let him know the position. We have been on a raiding trip for two days."

"Let me go with you?"

"There's nothing else to be done," Herrick answered, dubiously. "At any rate, we won't get in touch with the enemy until we meet Jackson. Is your horse fresh?"

"Much more than yours, I judge," answered Rosalie, who knew much about such matters, looking at the horses ridden by her brother and her lover and the jaded steeds of the men.

"Come, then. We'll get to the head of the column and so out of the dust."

As she passed by the long line of dusty soldiers, Richard, who wished to make the situation entirely clear and thus avoid gossip, said to several of the captains in a voice loud enough to be heard by all the men:

"This is my sister. She is going to Richmond and fortunately fell in with us."

The sight of Rosalie was a good one for the tired soldiers, and with true Southern gallantry they cheered her to the echo. Flushed and happy she took her place between her lover and her brother at the head of the regiment. It was evident that Herrick was out for business, for he led his men forward with as much speed as was consistent with the condition of the roads. But however engrossed he was in his duties, he found time to whisper a great many unimportant but delightful things to Rosalie.

The morning passed rapidly, and noontime found them in a pleasant valley with a good turnpike road before them called the Orange Plank Road. Herrick had dispatched several of his best mounted troopers to gallop ahead of the regiment and inform General Jackson of the condition of the Union flank.

In a pleasant glade he halted his command for half an hour and gave his men and animals a little rest. The tired horses were watered at a nearby brook and allowed to get a bite of fresh green grass. Fires were burning in an instant and the veteran troopers soon had coffee boiling which, with hard-tack, seasoned with hunger, made a welcome repast. Rosalie thought she had never eaten anything quite so delicious as this rude meal.

The several officers of the regiment came up and were presented to her during the halt, and for half an hour she held a sylvan court as Maid Marian might have done in Sherwood Forest. It was over all too soon.

"We shall have to push on more rapidly now," said Herrick, looking at her doubtfully, after she had mounted. He was delighted to be in her society, yet her presence greatly embarrassed him.

"You can't go too fast for me or for Whitefoot," said Rosalie, audaciously.

She had been miserable and wretched all week owing to her differences with her father, but now, youthlike, she had forgotten everything in the presence of her lover. Once more at the head of the column—and the mere being there, glancing backward from time to time at the long line of brave men following behind her, thrilled her to the very soul—she cantered down the road.

At four o'clock in the afternoon, coming through the forest, they saw before them in the road a great body of men advancing. A regiment of cavalry scouted in front and on either side. Immediately in rear of these, from where they stood on a hill, they marked a man riding followed by a numerous staff, then came the infantry, the guns, more cavalry, more infantry, more guns, in apparently interminable succession. The sunlight sparkled on bayonets and musket barrels, and was reflected from polished cannon; and, uptossed above the gray-clad host, from a hundred staffs, fluttered the flag she loved, the stars and bars of the blessed Southland.

"He's had the message!" cried Herrick, triumphantly.

"Yes, it must have reached him earlier than we thought possible," assented Major Trent, who was with them. The regiment had halted in the shelter of the trees.

"Who is it?" asked the girl.

"Stonewall Jackson," answered her lover, throwing back his head exultantly as he did so. "He's on the march. That is his corps. We belong to him. We are going to strike the Yankees on the flank and double them up. Bring up the colors!" he called out, turning back to the color guard. "Forward! Trot! March!"

CHAPTER X

STONEWALL JACKSON'S GREATEST DAY

Attended by the color bearer and followed by Rosalie and Richard, and then by the regiment, Herrick rode out of the wood and appeared on the road. The cavalry in advance, at sight of him, immediately prepared for offense or defense, but Herrick and his men went on boldly, and were at once recognized. A mighty cheer rent the air. Both regiments of cavalry halted. Herrick, attended by Richard and Rosalie and his orderly, galloped through the advance toward the solitary figure on horseback.

Never in all her life would Rosalie Trent forget the picture of that gray-bearded, silent, impassive man, riding composedly toward them, backed by his staff, veterans of a score of battles, all covered with the dust of hard marching and campaigning. Herrick saluted as he drew near.

"Good-afternoon, Colonel Herrick," said the general, formally.

"Good-afternoon, General. You got my message, sir?"

"I did. We were already on the march. With General Lee's permission, I have decided to attempt to turn the Union right, while he keeps them busy in front of him. I did not know, however, until your

message came, that the flank was so utterly unprotected. I cannot account for it."

"I suppose, sir," said Herrick, quickly, "they never dreamed you would attempt anything like that. They outnumber us three to one."

"Hardly that," interrupted the general, smiling.

"Well, two to one, anyway. There's no end to them, and they would, naturally, imagine that General Lee would keep every man he had in his own battle line without attempting to outflank."

"I suppose so," assented the general.

"And there's only one army on earth that would dare divide its forces and outflank an army twice as great as its own, and that's yours, sir."

Jackson nodded pleasantly.

"And there's only one general that would dare do it, either," continued Herrick, at which the general smiled slightly.

"Thank you, Colonel. Who is this?" he asked, looking at the young lady.

"Miss Rosalie Trent, sir. Major Trent's sister."

"And what is she doing here, may I ask? You will pardon me, Miss Trent, but this is no place for a woman."

"My father, sir—has—has sent me to Richmond, and I accidentally stumbled on Colonel Herrick's command."

"General, allow me," interposed Herrick. "Miss Trent is the lady who took the message to General Fulkerson last year, you will remember."

"Exactly," said the general. "Miss Trent, we owe you much. I wish there was something we could

do for you now. But there is desperate work before us and——"

"General Jackson," burst out the girl, impulsively, "I am not tired. Let me ride with you! I promise you I will remain where you tell me when the actual fighting begins."

"But if we should be driven back and forced to retreat?" said Jackson, gravely, yet with a sparkle of pleasant amusement in his face.

"I cannot conceive that you could ever be driven back or forced to retreat, sir."

"That answer"—and this time Jackson smiled broadly—"deserves a reward!"

"And, General Jackson," Herrick once more deftly interrupted, "Miss Trent is here because she doesn't agree with her father about the South."

"I see," said the general, kindly. "I understand. Well, if you will do exactly as I direct, and stay where I tell you, you may come."

"Does anyone ever disobey you, sir?" asked the girl, smiling brightly.

The general smiled again.

"Not twice," said Herrick, with singular appositeness.

Although he was on the eve of battle, having projected and being about to carry out successfully one of the most brilliant and daring military manœuvres in history, General Jackson found time to converse a great deal in the intervals of hearing reports, giving orders, and so forth, with the young woman who rode by his side at the head of that magnificent corps; and so long as she lived that afternoon in the com-

pany of her brother, her lover and the great-hearted, high-souled, brilliant soldier, in the midst of those famous veterans, on that mountain road as they journeyed under the trees with glad hearts and joyous anticipations, toward grim and bloody battle, remained one of her most cherished memories.

It was perhaps half after four in the afternoon when Jackson's men reached the old turnpike road about half a mile east of the Wilderness Tavern. Some two miles away lay the exposed flank of the Eleventh Corps—Howard's—of Hooker's army.

Jackson's march was well known to the Federal commanders. Through a gap in the trees his soldiers had been seen defiling over a distant mountain, but it was the general impression that the Confederates were in retreat, and no one had the slightest suspicion of the purpose of Jackson's famous manœuvre, especially as the last portion of it had been carefully concealed.

A halt was made, and "old Stonewall's foot cavalry," which had gained such imperishable renown under its great captain, was formed in three parallel battle lines perpendicular to the turnpike road and extending far into the woods on either side. With the first line, Rodes' division, were placed Crutchfield's guns, and on the flanks the cavalry. The field hospital was established at the Wilderness Tavern, in preparation for the certain bloody victims of the undertaking.

With the field hospital Rosalie Trent took her station, anxious to be of service. For having reported the Federal position, Jackson constituted Herrick's

men as his own escort. With a thoughtful kindness characteristic of him, just before the advance he ordered Herrick to see that Rosalie Trent was safely bestowed at the tavern, with directions for him to rejoin immediately.

Never would Herrick forget that mad ride along that road by the side of the woman he loved. There was no time for conversation, but they were together; he could look at her, rising and falling on her gallant steed as she raced along beside him in the sweetness of the soft May evening. The advance of the medical contingent was already busy at the tavern when the two reached there.

Springing from his saddle, Herrick lifted his sweetheart from Whitefoot, clasped her in his arms in one fervent embrace, careless of who might see, pressed a kiss upon her lips, heard her whispered "God keep you," and turned away.

There were prayers from thousands of women always during the war, and more especially on the eve of battle, but none ever prayed more fervently than the woman who waited with Dr. McGuire and his assistants for the first gory arrivals from the field. Her father had cast her off, her two brothers and her lover were at the front. Would they come through the battle storm scathless? Zealously she petitioned the Divine Father that He would watch over them, and amid her personal devotions were mingled prayers for the South and for that great general, Virginia's stay and hope.

All day long in the direction of Chancellorsville the roar and rumble of battle had been in the air, but

there was no mistaking the sharper, louder sounds, which at six o'clock that night indicated that Jackson had come in touch with the enemy. The men of the Eleventh Corps were idling in their camp, some of them preparing supper, when at that hour a sudden volley of musketry crashed through the startled air, a moment later followed by long lines of gray breaking through the underbrush and falling upon the exposed and open flank. The Confederates were squarely across the Union line. They were in rear of it, in front of it.

From twenty thousand throats rose the fierce rebel yell. Bullets swept the field. The shouting Confederates plunged through the smoke, bayonets gleaming.

No human power could have stayed that attack. The Union line was crumpled as if it had been paper caught in a giant hand. Officers threw themselves in front of their men praying and imploring them to stand, only to be shot down. Here and there little knots of men gathered and presented for a brief moment a bold front to the onrushing enemy. As well as have stayed the tornado with an upraised hand.

Organization, order, discipline, everything, went in one terrific smash. Like hunted hares, like the animals dislodged from their forest lairs, before the Confederate advance the Union troops streamed up the turnpike road or through the woods in every direction, seeking shelter from the terrible sweep of that inundating attack.

Howard, one-armed, desperate, heroically endeavoring to check the retreat and reform his men, was

swept back with the rest. Through the tangled underbrush the conquering Jackson came on. The defeated Howard gave back and back. It seemed as if the Union army were doomed; that the awful attack would never be stopped; that no check was possible.

But as the shades of night descended the Confederate troops became badly disorganized in turn. A halt to reform was called—fatal halt! Their front line had been badly mauled by the desperate Union troops before they broke and fled. One of the Confederate supporting lines must take its place in the van.

This took time. Time was all the Federals wanted. Twenty-two cannon were rushed to the front and loaded with shrapnel and canister. Infantry marching from the left and center in spite of the fact that Lee was attacking furiously all along the line, to keep the remainder of the army occupied, were approaching the scene of conflict.

A regiment of Pennsylvania cavalry, a mere handful of men, galloped up. General Pleasanton threw this regiment recklessly into the face of Jackson's men when the next advance began. They were sacrificed, of course, but Keenan's charge had not been in vain. It gave Pleasanton a little more time to get his guns in position.

At dusk the Confederates again burst from the woods. They had sheathed their own battle flags, and, with intent to delude the Union troops above them, fluttered but one standard, the stars and stripes captured a short time before. The ruse was futile.

Five thousand muskets exchanged messengers of

death with the Federal batteries. In their excitement the Confederates overshot. The Union guns were depressed, and the ricochet of the exploding shells swept them through the attacking line.

The assault was checked, and the golden opportunity lost. The Union troops were being reinforced with every moment. What might have happened, however, had it not been for the final casualty of these tremendous hours, cannot be determined.

Jackson, riding at the head of his own army to reconnoiter was fired upon by the Union troops in front of him. He turned and galloped back to his men. It was dark on the road under the trees. The Confederate soldiers, mistaking the party for Federal cavalry, opened fire.

The great captain fell from his horse struck by three bullets from his own men. Herrick, who was also slightly wounded by a bullet, which grazed his head, received the commander in his arms. He it was who, with others, brought Jackson to the Wilderness Tavern late that night. He had galloped on ahead to make arrangements.

There he found Rosalie Trent, white, haggard, bedraggled, blood-stained, weary. She had given invaluable service. Had not the demands of the wounded relieved the tension by affording her occupation, she must have died of anxiety for those she loved, all three of whom were safe.

"You are wounded!" she cried, as her lover burst upon her, his head tied with a blood-stained handkerchief.

"A scratch," answered the young man. "But Stonewall Jackson——"

"Not killed?"

"Desperately wounded. We don't know. They are bringing him here. We must make ready for him."

"And the battle?"

"We have won—but at a fearful price."

And Rosalie Trent stood by the general's bedside a week later when the great spirit of the knightly captain took its way to a land where wars are never waged. She, with his devoted wife and his faithful friends, heard the hero's dying words. In his delirium he cried out:

"Order A. P. Hill to prepare for action! Pass the infantry to the front rapidly. Tell Major Hawkes——"

She heard him stop, leaving the sentence unfinished. Moments of grateful quietness supervened, quietness as peaceful as the Sunday outside. The fever of unrest abated. The end, thank God, was to be peace. As they bent lower to watch and to listen, a smile of ineffable sweetness spread over the pale face of the dying commander. A look of relief, of joy—foretaste of the future, perhaps—illumined the wasted features. He whispered slowly and quietly:

"Let us cross over the river and rest under the shade of the trees."

And that was all.

No, Rosalie Trent never forgot her days with Stonewall Jackson.

CHAPTER XI

ONCE MORE IN THE VALLEY

ONCE more in the valley. At the head of his small brigade of veteran cavalry rode General Hugh Herrick. The three depleted regiments of his command now aggregated less than one thousand men. The natural selection of death and disease from which these had escaped numbered that one thousand among the best fighters on earth. Early in the fall of 1864 they had been sent from the Army of Northern Virginia, then closely beleaguered in Petersburg, to reenforce Jubal A. Early, at present confronting Sheridan's troops on Cedar Creek, some twenty miles from Winchester.

The results of the struggle in the valley between Early and Sheridan had been disastrous to the Confederates so far, yet they still had an army in being, and upon the arrival of all his expected reënforcements Early intended to resume the offensive immediately. Herrick's brigade was the last detachment of the expected increase to his strength. Richard Trent, then a lieutenant-colonel, had been killed at the head of his regiment at the famous battle of Yellow Tavern, under that peerless cavalry leader Jeb Stuart—to whose corps Herrick's regiment and brigade had been attached after the death of Stonewall

Jackson—who had also laid down his life for his beloved South on that bloody field. Herrick had been severely wounded in the hand to hand fighting during the Titanic conflict in the Wilderness, but had recovered to take part in the awful death struggle by which Grant had hammered back Lee from the Rapidan to Petersburg; and in repelling the furious assault of the Union troops on that place, Sergeant Tom—now Lieutenant Tom, if you please—had been badly wounded in two places.

He had been brought to Richmond to the home of his grandmother and there his sister had striven vainly to nurse him back to health. The wounds were slow in healing, the boy's condition was very bad. He made little progress toward complete recovery. Among other things that affected him he was pining for his father. His disrespectful remarks to the old man when he left him rankled in his mind. The boy's desire to see him grew and grew, for he had fairly idolized his father. It was more than probable that the letters which Rosalie had written to Colonel Trent, and which had elicited no answer, had never been received by him. Finally the surgeon informed Rosalie Trent that unless the stricken boy could see his father he would surely die.

Rosalie carried the hard news to General Herrick. She found him in the lines at the front, but just on the eve of a departure for the valley. In default of a better plan he offered to take her with him and leave her at her old home. When they told Lieutenant Tom of their intention the effect upon him was such as to bear out the surgeon's conclusion that if

the stricken son could only see his father and make his peace with him he would get well.

So once again Rosalie Trent found herself riding by her lover's side at the head of a column of marching men over the familiar highways of the fair valley of the Shenandoah. It was a different Rosalie and a different lover. The exactions and requirements which warfare made even upon women—perhaps, better, more especially upon women—had greatly changed her. The bitter sorrow attendant upon the death of Richard, the anxieties she felt as to her father and her younger brother, the constant strain of fear for her lover, under which she lived while he was winning the praise of all men by his gallantry at the front, had robbed her of some of her youth and of all her lightheartedness. She was a grave, quiet, composed woman, black-clad, sombre, riding by his side. Trouble and sorrow had mellowed and intensified her beauty, dignified it. She was no longer a girl, she was a woman with all a woman's anxieties, but with all a woman's insight and sympathy as well.

Herrick had become a stern, stark, veteran soldier. His finer sensibilities were somewhat blunted, perhaps, dulled by constant contact with the terrible forces of the bloody exacting warfare in which he was engaged. He, too, had lost much of his gaiety and buoyancy. In but one thing were these two lovers unchanged and that was in the affection they bore each other. Perfect trust and perfect confidence, without which there can be no perfect love, subsisted between them. The ashes of sorrow had covered the

fires of passion, but the coals still glowed redly beneath, and at a touch would burst into flame.

All around them were evidences of the terrible devastation to which the valley had been subjected. When Sheridan finished with it he remarked tersely that a crow could not fly over it without carrying his rations with him, and the statement was true. Very different was the land that fall from what it had been that smiling morning when Rosalie Trent had ridden through it to meet Stonewall Jackson's heroic men. Everything was changed, their love only the same. For love does not change. "Love is eternal, Love is divine." In the midst of her anxieties and griefs she could still take pride and feel satisfaction in the sight and presence of her lover.

Herrick hoped and expected that they would be able to deliver her to her father before coming in touch with the enemy. That hope was disappointed, for when the head of the column stopped where Greenaway Court had stood it was gone. The fields had been ravaged, the barns and outbuildings had been destroyed by the Union troops, and a party of Confederate guerrillas, knowing the predilections of the old colonel, had afterward applied the torch to the deserted mansion house itself. All they saw were crumbling ruins and charred and blackened walls.

"Typical," whispered Rosalie, as she looked at them, "of the fortunes of the family—of the hopes of the South!"

Wise men knew now that the Southern Confederacy was doomed absolutely, that the Union which

they had striven to disrupt was a fact accomplished, however long or short might the day of universal recognition all over the land be delayed. And still the Southerners doggedly fought on, they must be overwhelmed before they would acknowledge final defeat.

"Do not despair," said Herrick, sympathizing with and fully understanding her grief. A brief inspection had revealed to him that the place was deserted. "Your father is probably with the Federal Army under Sheridan. When we get to Early's camp I shall find means to ascertain his whereabouts and send you to him under a flag of truce."

Rosalie nodded her head and they once more cantered to the head of the column. There was nothing else to be done, of course. Although her presence embarrassed Herrick—as that of a woman always would do under such circumstances—he could not leave her by the way. There was no place where she would have been safe, and besides it was imperative for her to get to her father wherever he was, so they went on.

CHAPTER XII

A BRUSH WITH CUSTER

Some thirty miles below Winchester they unexpectedly came in touch with the enemy. General George Armstrong Custer, leading the Third Cavalry Division of the Union Army, was making a reconnoissance southward. Neither the Federals nor the Confederates had the slightest warning of each other's presence until they were almost in contact. They met at the junction of three roads. Herrick's scouts reported that a large force of Union cavalry was marching from the north down the main road. A moment later other scouts advised him that a regiment was on the west branch heading toward the junction. There was a third road leading eastward and then northward in the direction where the main force of Sheridan's army was supposed to be. Herrick could get no report from this road.

He had but a moment to come to a decision as to his course. He could retreat along the road he came or he could take the east road. Or he could await attack at the junction. To retreat would be to destroy the hope of effecting a junction with Early; to go to the east would be to throw himself into the hands of Sheridan, or, if not that, it would take him farther and farther from Early with every step. To await

attack would be to invite defeat. To advance was his only hope. Besides he was a fighter, and he thought that if he could fall upon the advancing troops and surprise them, he could perhaps defeat them, although he did not doubt that they outnumbered him greatly—how greatly he had no means of knowing, and, indeed, he never found out until too late.

The Yankees were reported in open order marching along somewhat carelessly, evidently without a thought of meeting the enemy. Herrick was nearer the cross roads than they and he determined to seize it, detach his rear regiment, throw it on the column approaching from the west, while with his two remaining regiments he would charge directly on the main body coming down from the north. He directed Rosalie Trent, whom he committed to the care of one of his staff and a squad of men, to remain at the cross roads where she would be out of imminent danger of battle, unless the Confederates were driven back. It was the best he could do for her. The several roads fell away from the crossing which was situated on the top of a small hill. From this point one could see exactly what was happening in front or to the left.

Herrick rode back along the flank of his column explaining his plans to his officers and to his men. Belts were tightened, pistols examined, the ranks were closed up and everything made ready as they rapidly trotted toward the cross roads. The brigade reached there in good time. Halting the troops where they were covered by the hill, Herrick rode forward

along the side of the road under the trees to see the situation for himself.

The scouts had reported correctly. The main body of the Union force was coming down the main road. Off to the left of him was a smaller body, a regiment apparently, although the view in that direction was somewhat obscured by trees. He could see no guns with them, nor any supporting infantry. The road to the eastward turned sharply a few hundred feet from the junction and he could see nothing upon it. He resolved to wait beneath the brow of the hill until the enemy, marching carelessly along, were almost upon him, and then to charge. He realized now that he was greatly outnumbered, but he hoped to counterbalance that disadvantage by the impetuosity of his attack, which would be in the nature of a surprise.

He instructed the colonel of the rear regiment if, or after, he had dispersed the regiment on the left that he should wheel to the right and fall upon the right flank of the Federal main body. If their united efforts succeeded in driving back the main army, which he could not hope to defeat entirely, Herrick purposed to retire to the cross roads and make his escape by the left hand road, which would take him directly to Early. The officers were cautioned not to let their men get out of hand, therefore, in the excitement of the charge. The bold plan being understood by everyone, and all things otherwise ready, they waited until the signal to advance was given. It startled Rosalie Trent to witness the jesting indifference with which the men talked of the approaching struggle.

There was little time for long farewells between the lovers—and little need for them. A few hurried words from the man, a whispered prayer from the woman, a warm hand clasp, and he was gone at the head of his men. The colonel of the rear regiment led his troops around the hill through the trees before striking the branch road. The astonished Federals slowly coming up the hill were thrown into confusion when the crest was suddenly covered with the yelling shouting horsemen.

Breaking into a gallop Herrick led his command in a wild rush down the hill. But there were soldiers with that Federal advance, sharp commands rang out instantly. The men closed up and drew their weapons as the Confederates, firing a pointblank volley, which threw the Union front into wild disorder, swept down upon them through the smoke with uplifted sabres. They smashed into the van regiment and brushed it aside as if its men had been made of straw. In a moment they had plunged into the heart of the first of the two Union brigades before them. Through the mass of shrieking, yelling men they plowed, clashing, stabbing, cutting, thrusting with demoniac energy, and, when weapons were unavailable in the mêlée, using naked hands to pull one another from the horses. Even the mettlesome animals caught the spirit of hatred and conflict and bit and tore like mad dogs. For awhile there was no stopping the Confederates, but gradually as the effect of the surprise wore away the resistance put up by the Federal troops became stiffer and stiffer, and finally, the impetus of the wild charge being spent, the advance came to a dead stop.

Overflowing the road on either side into the fields the conflict continued a desperate hand to hand struggle in which sheer weight of numbers began to tell against Herrick's men. Where was that rear regiment? If only it had succeeded in its appointed task and could fall upon the Union flank now. But the rear regiment never came. Above the horrible wrangle of the conflict Herrick thought he heard the sound of guns to the left. He was right. The regiment on the east had masked a battery, which had opened on his rear regiment as it charged. Having a longer distance to go than the other two, that regiment no longer existed as a corporate entity. The return charge of the Union cavalry, outnumbering the Confederates by two to one, had wiped it out. Herrick's plan had been brilliantly conceived, but he saw that it had failed. The Union forces were too strong for him; he must retire or be cut to pieces.

Assembling a handful of horse he threw himself upon the Union center, which gave back temporarily, then his bugle sounded the retreat. His well trained men turned and raced back along the road. Those that were left, that is. They got a long start before the disorganized Federal troops realized the situation and galloped forward in swift, exultant pursuit. Half way to the hill Herrick, riding in rear of his men and urging them to safety, discovered Rosalie Trent coming toward him, her black dress whipping in the wind caused by her rapid gallop. She spurred to his side, and, without stopping, wheeled her horse and galloped with him.

"The regiment to the left," she cried, "is cut to

pieces! My escort are killed! The crossing is filled with soldiers coming from the east road!"

"Into the woods!" cried Herrick, motioning to his men, "on either side!" He realized the situation instantly. He was surrounded. First one and then another of his men, then all comprehending, leaped their horses into the woods on either side in a desperate endeavor to escape. Indeed they could now see the crest of the hill they had just left occupied by the Union troops. Their only chance of freedom lay through the undergrowth beneath the trees. Herrick seized the bridle of Miss Rosalie's horse and turned him about, both making for the cover of the forest. They had not gone far before a bullet struck Herrick's horse. The animal stumbled and fell. A moment later he and Rosalie were prisoners.

Out of his thousand men some four hundred had been killed or wounded, three hundred and fifty were prisoners. The remainder got away. At least five hundred Federal troopers lay dead or wounded on that hotly contested little field. After the battle was over Herrick was led into the presence of General Custer, a boyish young man, the very picture of a soldier and a horseman. Seeing the lady the Union officer sprang from his horse and took off his hat, throwing back his head and shaking his yellow curls with characteristic gesture as he did so.

"Madam," he said courteously, but in great surprise, "what evil chance has brought you here?"

Herrick took it upon himself to reply.

"Sir, are you in command of these troops?" he asked.

"I am, sir. General George A. Custer, at your service."

"I am General Hugh Herrick."

"Was that your regiment?"

"My brigade, sir."

"Well, you did a gallant thing in attacking us. We outnumbered you four to one."

"It was my only chance, General."

"I see," said Custer. "Is there anything I can do for you?"

"Nothing but to look after my poor men, the wounded, I mean."

"They shall be attended to as my own. And this lady——"

"Is Miss Trent."

"Not the daughter of Colonel Richard Trent of Greenaway Court!"

"The same, sir."

"Miss Trent, you will be glad to learn that your father is at General Sheridan's headquarters."

"I am seeking to rejoin him, sir," said Rosalie. Then realizing that some explanation was necessary, she continued: "My brother is very ill in Richmond. He is an officer in General Herrick's command. The surgeon says that unless he sees his father he will die. My elder brother was killed at Yellow Tavern and I came to find my father."

"Madam," said the general, sympathetically, "I will send you to General Sheridan at once. We are, as you see, reconnoitering this section of the valley. Perhaps you would like to go with Miss Trent, General Herrick?"

"I am your prisoner, General Custer, and at your disposal, yet I confess that I should feel easier were I to see Miss Trent safely bestowed with her father. Miss Trent and I are to be married," he continued, "when this war is over."

"Oh, I see," said Custer, smiling. "Lieutenant Standish," to an officer of his staff, "you will take a platoon and escort Miss Trent and General Herrick to General Sheridan's headquarters. Also turn over General Herrick to General Sheridan or whoever is in command if he is not there and report this engagement to him."

"Yes, sir."

"And a word in your ear," continued Custer, beckoning to his officer and dropping his voice, "watch out for that man! I know him. He is dangerous. Don't let him escape!"

"I'll deliver him to General Sheridan, sir, to-night, or I'll be a dead man!" returned Standish, confidently.

"You would better start at once," said Custer, again turning to the other two, "if you would reach the camp to-night. I have a horse for you, General. I will see that your men are taken care of."

"May I speak with them before I leave?"

"Certainly," said Custer heartily, appreciating his prisoner's condition as only a brave man who himself led men could.

Accompanied by Rosalie, the broken-hearted, defeated young commander went from man to man—the wounded had been separated from the rest and were being attended to in the temporary field hospital,

which had been improvised alongside the road under the trees—with brief words of soldierly cheer and encouragement. Then he turned to the unhurt prisoners. The men crowded around him, some of them weeping like children as he bade them farewell. They had followed him for four years, many of them, and they realized this was the end. The brief time allotted him was soon over, and perhaps an hour after the battle Herrick and Rosalie were again riding side by side down the valley, but this time they were prisoners.

CHAPTER XIII

GENERAL SHERIDAN INTERVENES

Lieutenant Standish sent two troopers ahead, threw out pickets on either side, and rode himself with the remainder of his platoon a few yards in rear of Herrick, who was thus in a measure alone with Rosalie. The two captives spoke apparently upon indifferent subjects, fearful lest they should be overheard, but between every sentence there was a whispered private word or two. Rosalie knew now that she was going to meet her father. Herrick need not be bothered with her any longer. If a possibility of escape presented itself he must not regard her, she urged, and Herrick agreed.

They had gone perhaps five miles from the scene of battle and were riding through a rather thick wood. The ground beneath the trees was full of underbrush. Suddenly shots rang out from the right. There was a stir in the bushes there. An instant later a volley at close range was poured into the Union troops. Lieutenant Standish ordered his men to deploy at once. Before he could be obeyed Herrick wheeled his horse and dashed for the bushes whence the firing had come. Standish, with the nearest trooper, an old sergeant, spurred his horse to intercept him while the men opened fire on the enemy

concealed in the bushes. Swiftly as the two soldiers were moving Rosalie Trent, at the imminent risk of her life, threw her own horse fairly across the path of the pursuers, thus interposing between Herrick and the Union troopers. She checked them for a moment, but that moment sufficed. Herrick disappeared in the bushes. Standish, unconscious prophet, got a bullet in his breast which ended him. A half dozen saddles among the Union men were emptied. They halted, gave back, and when the sergeant, who succeeded to the command, rallied them again, the enemy had disappeared. Being without a commissioned officer the pursuit was not pressed vigorously, and Herrick and the men who had attacked the Union detachment made good their flight toward the mountains. A little handful of his own regiment—the last remnant of the famous Black Horse Cavalry—who had escaped from the engagement at the cross roads, observing the Union troop approaching, had made out Herrick a prisoner and had determined to effect his rescue. They had done so.

That night Rosalie Trent reached the headquarters at Winchester. General Sheridan had just come in from Washington. His army was at Cedar Creek, some twenty miles distant. The battle of the cross roads, the death of Standish in the skirmish in the woods, the escape of Herrick, the presence of Miss Trent, were all reported to him. He sent for the sergeant to hear his statement in person and directed him to bring the prisoner with him. Soon Rosalie found herself in the presence of the famous Union commander.

"We'd 'a' caught the rebel general, sir," said the sergeant completing his recital, "if it hadn't been for this young woman."

"How was that?" asked Sheridan, sharply fixing a penetrating glance upon the woman standing quiet and composed before him.

"She jumped her horse between me an' Leftenant Standish, an' that giv the rebel time to git to the woods, sir."

"Is this true, madam?"

"It is."

"Why did you do it?"

"Why should I not? I am a Southern woman."

"Umph!" said the general.

"I love the South. I would give my life for—for her cause."

"Miss Trent," returned Sheridan, yet there was a twinkle in his eye, "allow me, I think it was for a Southern man you did it."

"I would do it for any Southern man, sir!" answered Rosalie, the color flaming in her face.

"Quite so, but with particular joy for that particular man, I have no doubt. I have heard your story from your father."

"He is well, sir?"

"As well as ever, I fancy," returned Sheridan.

"Thank God!"

"I am glad for your sake that General Herrick escaped, although sorry for my own. It is the desperate gallantry and determination of such men as he that protracts this hopeless struggle."

"Sir," said Rosalie, "so long as a Southerner can

lift a gun the struggle will be continued, and we are not without hope."

"No, I suppose not, though upon what you base it——"

"The valor of our men, sir," she interrupted quickly.

"And I've no doubt the constancy of your women as well," laughed the little general, somewhat grimly it must be admitted. "Meanwhile, you wish to see your father?"

"If you please, sir. My brother—my only surviving brother—is seriously ill in Richmond. He has not recovered from a wound received at Petersburg and pines for his father. My elder brother was killed at Yellow Tavern. I came to ask my father to go to my brother in Richmond."

Sheridan nodded.

"Orderly!" he called out, "my compliments to Colonel Trent and ask him to come here, if possible. Be seated, madam," said the general kindly. "This is the terrible part of war that women should be mixed up in it, yet so long as men are born of woman, I suppose it will have to be. Colonel Trent," he said, as the old man, looking much older and more feeble than when he had sent Rosalie away the year before, hobbled into the room supported by two faithful negroes, "your daughter."

"I have no daughter!" returned the colonel, striving to stand erect, steeling his heart again.

"Nonsense!" said Sheridan, sharply. "Your daughter has come here at the risk of her life to bring you a message and you will oblige me by listening to her."

"At your request, General," returned the old man, turning to his daughter, who stood before him, her arms slightly outstretched toward him.

"Father," she began, "unless you would indeed have no sons, come with me."

"What—what do you mean?" faltered the colonel.

"Richard was killed——"

"What!"

"At Yellow Tavern at the head of his regiment."

"And Tom?"

"Was desperately wounded at Petersburg. He calls for you. Unless you go to him he will die. I have come to fetch you."

The colonel leaned against the table stricken to the heart. His iron determination was at last broken. Ten years apparently had been added to his feeble frame since he entered that room.

"What shall I do?" he said, helplessly, turning to Sheridan, who had sprung to his side to assist him.

"Do? Why, damn it—beg your pardon, Miss Trent—go to him at once! Your loyalty is known, your devotion to our cause is beyond question. Did I not see you apply the torch to your barns with your own hand, lest your harvest should fall into the hands of the Reb—the Confederates? Go and save the boy's life! The Confederacy will scarcely last the winter, in the spring it will be ended. Go to Richmond. By heavens, if I had a daughter like that I'd go anywhere for her! I'll write you a pass. Go by Harper's Ferry. See Stanton. If that doesn't work, see Grant. He will put you in Richmond for my sake. Madam, I am happy to do anything for so brave a woman. May prosperity——"

"Oh, General Sheridan," exclaimed Rosalie, gratefully seizing his hand, "I did not know a Northern general could be so good and kind!"

That night, for they waited for nothing, Rosalie and her father started for Harper's Ferry. The next morning the roar of battle far to the southward of Winchester told Sheridan that Early was attacking his men. Instantly he began that wild ride which, if nothing else had done so, immortalized him among the heroes of the world.

A little body of dejected Confederates, led by Hugh Herrick, concealed in the underbrush, saw him pass. A cloud of dust on the road, a black horse buffeting through it, a blue-clad, stern-faced little man, a scattered escort following after, but not keeping up with the spirited energy that drove the great horse of the great captain over the "arrowy Alpine road"—that was all.

They heard afterward, how he saved the day, how he checked the retreat; how he reformed his men; how he drove Early, finally and forever defeated, helter-skelter down the valley in complete and utter disorganization. There was nothing left for Herrick and the handful of men who had rallied to him, survivors of his brigade, but to return as best they could to Richmond and join the heroic remnant under Lee, holding off the thunder stroke of Grant before the earth walls of Petersburg.

CHAPTER XIV

LINCOLN, GRANT AND LEE

The contrast between the scene they had just left and that of which they were now a part was appalling. Back of them were well-fed, well-clothed, properly housed, thoroughly equipped, cheerful looking soldiers. Around them were ragged, tattered, starving, gaunt-faced, tired-out men. Only in the readiness and efficiency of their weapons was there any parity between the groups. Half a mile had made all the difference. An hour before they had been at City Point, the headquarters of General Grant. Now they were in Petersburg, the headquarters of General Lee.

It had not been easy for them to get there. Brusque Secretary Stanton had positively and peremptorily refused to assist them in any way, in spite of Colonel Trent's well known loyalty and the valuable services he had rendered to the forces of the government in the valley of the Shenandoah throughout the war. But the colonel, as indomitable as the great war minister, had resolutely carried matters to the fountain head of authority and power, and from President Lincoln himself he had secured a note to General Grant.

Wherever he had gone throughout the city of Wash-

ington, in the weary days he spent there, in his endeavor to get permission to pass through the Union lines and enter Richmond, if the Confederates would allow it, his daughter had accompanied him. She was clad in the same cheap clothing she had worn when she had been captured. Her father, who suffered from no present lack of means, since much of his property was invested in the North, had offered to provide for her bountifully, even luxuriously, but she had refused to accept anything except the barest necessities of life. In her unbending pride of section she would take nothing from Northern bounty, although it was offered to her by her own father. She had so great a feeling of loyalty to the South that she could not in any way avail herself of opportunities of which her less fortunate fellow countrywomen were deprived. Therefore it was a very shabby, poverty-stricken woman whom her father presented to the great President in the White House.

Privation, scanty food, hard work, which she shared with her sisters inexorably shut up in Richmond and Petersburg, had left their marks upon her face, which was nevertheless so beautiful as to be out of accord with her apparel. She held her head high and bore herself as proudly as she had ever done in her life when she entered the President's private room. She had not wished to be there. She had pleaded that she might be spared the, to her, crowning humiliation of an introduction to the despised and detested Lincoln. But her father had gravely insisted. He was going with her into Richmond, she must go with him to the White House, he argued logically enough.

Under his compulsion, therefore, she came. Being there she determined to make the best possible use of her unsought appointment by studying the man whom she, as well as the whole South, regarded with feelings of equal hatred and disdain.

The first impression she formed of the gaunt, rugged face towering above her was that of intense ugliness. Undoubtedly he was the homeliest man she had ever seen. But when her father told the President of her errand, how she came to be there, what she wanted, the great tall man stooped over her, took her hand and smiled upon her. And there was so much courtesy, so much gentle good will, such a warm heart evidenced by that smile, that in spite of her effort to steel her heart, insensibly her hatred began to be dissipated by his winning kindness.

"My poor child," he said, in his deep strong voice, "how you must have suffered."

"Yes, yes, Mr. President, as all the women in the South have suffered," she answered, swiftly.

"Ay, as women always suffer in war," responded the President gravely. "Meanwhile, I shall be glad to do anything for you," he continued, almost crushing her hand in his enormous palm, "to help you, to help your brother, even if it be giving aid and comfort to the enemy."

"Thank you, sir, if you could only know how he needs my father——"

"I must say," said Lincoln, "turning to the colonel, "that your daughter looks as if she were in need of help herself." There was a note of warning, or was it of reproof?

"I have offered her everything, Mr. President," protested Colonel Trent, hurriedly, "urged upon her clothing, luxuries——"

"My father has been most kind to me, sir," interrupted Rosalie, jealous of the reputation of her parent, "but I will take nothing. I will share the exigencies of the situation with the women of the South. The war has stripped us of everything."

"Would God," said the President, impulsively, "that this war were over."

"Oh, Mr. President," Rosalie burst out impetuously, emboldened by the kindness and goodness radiating from that simple yet splendid personality before which she stood, "you can end it. Won't you tell the soldiers to let us alone?"

"Rosalie!" cried her father, scandalized.

"My child," said the President, and for the first time she noticed the touch of wonderful pathos in the craggy countenance before her, "if it were a matter between you and me alone we might end it here and now. But it is a question of a great country against a divided State. Each one must do his duty as he sees it; I must go on in my appointed course until the end, and God will determine the issue."

He spoke at once with the gravity of a seer and the inspiration of a prophet. In his declaration there was a finality which admitted of no further discussion. The President broke the silence that ensued upon his solemn words, for he turned to a table, sat down before it, scribbled a brief note and handed it to Colonel Trent.

"Take that," he said, "to General Grant. He

will arrange it if possible. Good-by, Colonel Trent. I hope you will find your boy on the road to recovery. When the war is over bring him to me. Good-by, my dear young lady. May God bless you for a brave honest heart, however you may be mistaken."

As Rosalie bent low before him he laid his hand lightly for a moment upon her head—as if in benediction. And Rosalie never forgot that moment. She left that room with a changed feeling toward the great President. The cause of the South was hopeless, even she began to realize that, though she fought against the admission with all the strength of her nature, but in the President she instinctively felt the South would have in the hour of defeat a warm and generous friend.

Armed with this letter and with the necessary forms for travel, which were easily secured upon the presentation of the pass to the proper authorities, four days later Colonel Trent and Rosalie descended from the ramshackle carriage which had brought them from the railroad to the headquarters of General Grant. It was a busy place and they had to wait some time for an audience with the great general. Presently their turn arrived and they were conducted to the private office. The little general shook hands with Colonel Trent—whom he had known in the Mexican War and who was further known to him by reputation as well—bowed slightly to Rosalie Trent, who surveyed him with scarcely less interest than she had looked at Lincoln. Her heart sank at the sight of Grant; without grace, polish, or any great physical charm, his was one of the most impressive

personalities with which she had ever come in contact. He looked as if nothing on earth would ever turn him from his purpose; as if valor and courage, skill and daring, sacrifice and devotion, might all spend themselves fruitlessly against his stubborn, unbending, unchangeable resolution. If Lincoln typified the spiritual side of the Northern cause, its soul, Grant was the very incarnation of its physical force, its body.

Not until she had seen these two men had Rosalie permitted herself to despair. The whole South had had such blind faith in the justice of its cause, such unbounded trust in the genius of its general, and such sublime confidence in the valor of its soldiery, that although matters had gone sadly against them of late, they had never permitted themselves to doubt of ultimate success. Rosalie had begun to doubt while she had listened to Linclon. She was assured in her doubts when she saw Grant.

"What do you wish, Colonel Trent?" asked Grant, after introductions had taken place.

"To get into Petersburg and Richmond, sir."

"I have been trying that myself for three months, with a hundred thousand men to assist me, and have not yet succeeded," returned the general, grimly. There was not a smile upon his face, but a twinkle of humor in his eye relieved the dogged tenacity of his expression as he spoke.

"You will get in in the end, however," said Colonel Trent, promptly.

The general nodded as if there could be no argument about that and Rosalie's face flamed.

"Not while General Lee and his soldiers are there to prevent it, sir, I am sure!" she cried, spiritedly. Then she could have bitten her tongue out for her imprudence.

"I had thought you were a Union man, Colonel Trent," said the general quietly, looking keenly at the woman.

"I am, sir, but my daughter——"

"Ah, I see," returned the general tactfully, anxious to spare the older man the pain of a confession which would hurt him.

"I am a Southern woman and I glory in it," said Rosalie.

Somehow or other while Lincoln had calmed, soothed her, had almost won her affection, this little soldier excited all the antagonisms of her soul. Grant nodded at her, stared at her speculatively a moment, and then turned to the colonel.

"You have a request to make, sir?" he asked, formally.

"I have letters for you from President Lincoln and from General Sheridan, General."

Grant took the papers, read them swiftly, and handed them back.

"My son is ill in Richmond, sick unto death," explained Colonel Trent.

"You shall go at once. General Rawlins!" called General Grant to one of his staff officers, "see that a flag of truce is got ready to take this gentleman and his daughter to the enemy's lines at Petersburg. Do not think so hardly of us, Miss Trent," continued the general, offering her his hand, "war is a wretched

business and the sooner it is over the better for all of us. That's why I am doing my best to end it—quickly, at whatever present cost. I want nothing so much as peace, believe me, ma'am."

There was something attractive about the little soldier, after all, although he was different from the kind of soldiers Rosalie Trent was accustomed to see, and to her surprise she found herself shaking hands with the hated Union general! Perhaps she repented a little her furious outburst of a few moments before. Really these Northern people did not seem so very bad when one came in actual contact with them!

All this was forgotten for the time being, however, when the flag was halted outside the earthworks of Petersburg. After the necessary formalities the escort to the flag went back to City Point while Rosalie and her father were taken through the lines. Rosalie Trent was well known to General Lee and she asked to be led to his headquarters, her father leaving further conduct of the affair to her thereafter. The same simplicity and absence of pretentious parade which had marked both the White House and the headquarters at City Point were apparent in Petersburg—the simplicity of greatness. Fresh from contact with the two great personalities of the war on the Northern side, Rosalie, as she re-introduced her father to General Lee—they, too, had been comrades in the Mexican War—could not forbear contrasting her hero with the other two.

Lee was as gentle and as kind as Lincoln, as forceful and powerful as Grant, she thought with a thrill of pride, and there was about him a refinement, a

grace—the stamp of birth and breeding, of authority long inherited that neither of the others had exhibited. In her eyes the others might be princes, ay, but here was a king among men, the royal, the magnificent Lee. Like every woman, old or young in the South, she loved him. With him to lead there could be no failure. God would not allow him to fail. Her confidence revived, her doubts vanished, as she stood in the presence of this great man and great captain.

"I can admit you to Petersburg, Colonel Trent," said General Lee, gracefully acknowledging the introduction after he had read Grant's note, for all Colonel Trent was in his eyes a recreant to Virginia and therefore far worse than a Northern enemy, "but I warn you, sir, I shall not be able—or willing—to pass you out again."

"I shall be content to wait until the Union troops come in," said Colonel Trent, coolly.

"Father!" protested the girl, indignantly, but General Lee, quite master of himself, in spite of the shocking discourtesy, turned to the young lady and smiled deprecatingly.

"Never mind, Miss Rosalie," he said, quietly, "I am quite aware that the Union troops are very desirous of getting in, but we still hold the lines. We shall hold them until the last man. Colonel Trent, I regret, as I have often done, to differ with an old comrade in arms, to find one who stood shoulder to shoulder with his fellow citizens of the Old Dominion, now doing his best to assist in overwhelming Virginia and the South, but at least we can differ without recrimination. It's too late for that now, sir."

"General Lee," said Colonel Trent, impulsively, with a flush of shame in his old withered face, "your courtesy humiliates me. I ask your pardon for my rude speech of a moment since. I appreciate the kindness you do me in allowing me to go to my son. I shall await your pleasure as to my return. Meanwhile, for old comradeship, allow me—if in any way——"

The colonel hesitated, he had intended to put his purse at the other's private disposal.

"I want nothing, Colonel Trent," interrupted the general briefly, "nothing at least that you can give me. But your offer was kindly meant and I accept your apology. We can perhaps some day resume our ancient friendship. Now, Miss Trent, before you go," continued Lee, after directing Colonel Marshall to make out the necessary papers giving Colonel Trent freedom to pass to Richmond, "perhaps you can tell me something about the valley. Early has been defeated, I know, but what of Herrick?"

"General Lee," said Rosalie, "we were set upon by General Custer's division, and although General Herrick and his men made an heroic defense they were cut to pieces. The general and myself were made prisoners, but General Herrick escaped. Have you heard anything from him?"

"Nothing," answered Lee, sadly.

"I had hoped," said the girl, "that he might have arrived here before me."

"It's hardly possible, Miss Rosalie, but when he does come I shall send him to you, if I can spare him for half an hour. He's too good a soldier to allow

himself to be killed or captured again. Colonel Trent, may I offer you my sympathy on the loss of your son, Colonel Richard Trent? His conduct often came under my personal observation. He died at the head of his regiment at Yellow Tavern. He was a most gallant and promising officer, and I, together with the whole South, deeply regret his loss."

"His cause was not mine," said Colonel Trent, gravely, "but I am glad that he died like a soldier and a gentleman."

"He could have died in no other way, sir."

"Thank you. Good-by, General Lee."

CHAPTER XV

AFTER APPOMATTOX

For seven months Rosalie Trent and her father remained in Richmond. Lieutenant Tom got well rapidly after his father joined him, and went back to his regiment. Herrick succeeded in rejoining Lee's army a month after his escape from Custer's men. Rosalie scarcely recognized the gaunt and haggard man who dragged himself up the steps of her Richmond home. The old colonel's money, of which he had brought with him a liberal amount in gold by realizing at great loss upon some of his Northern securities in his need, provided such necessary dainties as were procurable; and, aided by his sweetheart's fond and careful nursing, the first of the year found Herrick in comparative health once more. He had lost his command, there was no other available for him in that depleted and disintegrating army, so General Lee attached him to his personal staff.

Old Colonel Trent was greatly changed. The death of his eldest son, and later of his aged mother, the long illness of Lieutenant Tom, the thought of his daughter suffering such terrible hardships, the misery he saw about him, the uncomplaining courage with which the people bore the frightful pressure of the siege, the prostrate ruined condition of

the South, which he loved in his way as much as those who sought to disrupt the Union, all appealed most profoundly to him. His health had been failing also. He had borne his share of the hardships of the siege without a murmur, as became an old soldier, but they had told upon him terribly. He prayed now only that he might live to see the day when the war would be ended. He had become reconciled to Herrick, and if that young man was spared the colonel felt that Rosalie's future was assured.

One Sunday, the first of April, Rosalie who was at church, saw a messenger walk in during the services and go hastily to the President's pew. The tall, lean figure of the chief of the Confederacy rose instantly and quickly left the sacred building. In a few hours it was known that Grant had at last outflanked Lee's line and that Petersburg and Richmond were abandoned. Herrick sent his sweetheart a hasty note by a servant saying that he could not leave Lee, that the remains of the Army of Northern Virginia were going out for a last try with the terrible Grant and their old enemy the Army of the Potomac. That the end was certain. So soon as all was over he promised to rejoin her in Richmond if he could, and then he begged her to wait. That night was a night of horror and despair in Richmond, the exodus of the government was lighted by the flaming buildings blazing on every hand.

The next morning Colonel Trent, who had grown steadily more and more feeble, insisted on being brought out on the front porch. It was a bright and beautiful spring day, the blossom laden air balmy and

tender. The old man sat in his chair, sad Rosalie standing by his side, as she had stood by his side on that spring day years before when Virginia went out of the Union. How much had happened since then; how many changes, how many losses, how many shattered hopes, how many vanished dreams? In those four years she had lived a lifetime; in them a nation had been born, and to-day it lay a-dying in the springtime. Richard was gone, never to return; Lieutenant Tom was fighting and fleeing in the army to the southward; General Hugh was by the side of the heroic great-hearted Lee. Her father was slipping away from her. She looked down upon his face, so very pale, upon his bent, emaciated body, and felt herself already alone.

There was a rattling of drums mingled with cries and shouts and cheers far up the street. A horde of negroes filled the way in front of her. Presently, pushing through the crowd, came soldiers in blue—black soldiers!

"Negro troops, the last affront!" thought Rosalie bitterly, clenching her hands as she stared at the blue-clad figures. The sunlight sparkled on bayonets and flags. Her father's opinion of the colored race was at bottom much what her own had been, but the old man's eyes fell on that flag, he saw nothing else.

"Lift me up," he whispered, as the head of the column drew abreast the house.

She would have remonstrated, but something constrained her to obey him. Throwing her young arms about the wasted form, she drew him up with all her strength. The colonel slowly brought his hand to his forehead in salute. The color bearer happened to see

him at that moment. The act was so striking and so unusual, so unexpected in conquered, Confederate Richmond, that instinctively he dipped his colors in graceful salute.

"Thank God!" murmured the old soldier to himself—although his daughter caught the words—"I have seen it. The war is over! Virginia is back in the Union.

She felt him collapse in her arms. She laid him gently back in the chair, his head with its long gray hair fell forward upon his breast. Yes, the war was over, Colonel Richard Trent had lived to see it and no more.

Two days after a man, great and gaunt, melancholy yet resolved, stood in the darkened parlor where, in a rude pine box—the best that could be procured in that stricken city—lay all that was mortal of Colonel Richard Trent.

"My dear child," he said kindly to the drooping, tearless figure despairful by the coffin—and somehow the girl reminded the President of the South, crushed and broken by the dead body of its hopes—"I heard. I came to tell you how sorry I am. To tell you that I understand your love for the South, that I love it myself, and, if I am spared, I shall deal with it in love, in mercy, in tenderness. May God Almighty comfort you. Good-by."

He bent his head, touched his lips to her hair and was gone.

Rosalie remembered all this when, ten days later, the telegraph flashed over the world the dire news that Abraham Lincoln had been murdered. He, too, had lived to see the end of the war—and nothing

more. She knew that the bullet of the assassin had stricken down the best friend of the prostrate land she loved. In her own bereavement she understood, and out of her own sorrow she lamented for the mighty who had fallen.

After Appomattox, Hugh Herrick and her brother Tom found her awaiting them. It was from her lover that she learned of that famous interview between General Grant and General Lee, the immortal magnanimity of the victorious Union captain, the ineffable dignity of the defeated Southern leader. She heard how Lee rode back to his troops on old Traveler that day saying as they clustered about him in tears—those hard fighters not ashamed to weep—

"Men, we have fought the war together. I have done the best I could for you."

Yes, the men of the South—and the women as well, let it not be forgotten—had fought through the war together, and each had done his best.

Hugh Herrick and Rosalie Trent were married almost immediately. There was no necessity for waiting—they had waited so long already. The death of Colonel Trent had left his affairs in much confusion. The grasping agents in the North, it was found, had taken advantage of his six months absence in Richmond to dissipate or steal all of his property there. It was just as well, for neither Rosalie nor Herrick would have touched a penny of it under the circumstances. Together, penniless, without resource, save that which comes from great heart and high courage, fine purpose and true love, they went back into the valley to repair their shattered fortunes and do their part in the upbuilding of the State.

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